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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 68/NO. 17 MAY 4, 2004

INSIDE

Is biology women's destiny?

The roots of women's oppression

—PAGE 9

Utah miners score victory, defeat ban on picket trailer

UMWA-organized workers push back bosses' attack on strike

BY GUILLERMO ESQUIVEL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—"We won with the support of the retired miners and the United Mine Workers of America," said Juan Salazar, in an April 18 interview here at the picket trailer of the striking Co-Op miners. "We beat back the company in their attempt to take away our right to be in front of the mine."

Salazar, one of the miners on strike against CW Mining, was speaking about a significant victory the strikers had scored a few days earlier by maintaining their right to picket at the mine's entrance with a camper trailer, a picket shack, and strike signs. The mine is owned by the Kingston family. The company put pressure on state agencies to revoke the permit for the picket trailer and circulated rumors among scabs that the picket line itself was about to come down, said several miners.

AS WE GO TO PRESS

Garment workers at Point Blank in Florida win first union contract

— See page 4

But the bosses got a surprise. The strikers fought back and defeated their plans, Salazar said. "This will send a message to the company that we are serious and that we deserve respect," he added. "They thought it would be easy to remove us from the mine entrance. They were wrong."

On April 13, a delegation of four strikers, five retired United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members and a spouse,

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Militant/Anne Carroll

Striking Co-Op miners in front of picket trailer March 22. From left, Natividad Flores, Bill Estrada, Juan Salazar, and Apolonio Acosta.

How U.S. gov't has restricted access to abortion nationwide: report from Pittsburgh

BY MARTY RESSLER AND LA'TASHA MAYES

PITTSBURGH—The death here on March 29 of obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Robert Kisner, 63, shone a spotlight on the urgency of the fight to keep abortion safe, legal, and accessible.

Kisner, an African-American, was one of only four doctors performing the procedure in the city of Pittsburgh. In interviews here April 7–8, doctors Morris Turner and Claire Keyes said that in Pennsylvania only 13 percent of counties have abortion providers, the same as the average nationwide. Among rural counties across the United States, only 3 percent have facilities offering abortion.

These facts show that while abortion was decriminalized in 1973 in the United States it has become increasingly difficult for women across the country—especially working-class and farm women—to gain access to abortion services, the doctors said.

Women's rights backers say that this reality, and new measures to further restrict abortion rights such as the misnamed Partial-Birth Abortion Act and Unborn Victims of Violence Act, is why they have been campaigning for a massive turnout for the April 25 march on Washington to defend women's

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White House vows to press offensive against Iraqi cities

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As U.S. troops occupied Fallujah in central Iraq and encircled Najaf in the south, U.S. president George Bush, with British prime minister Anthony Blair at his side, told reporters here April 16 that Washington and London "will not waver" in their current military offensive in Iraq.

Referring to recent attacks on the occupying forces by the Mahdi Army, a Najaf-based militia led by Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, and other insurgents, Bush said at a prime-time news conference three days earlier that those groups will not "run us

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Bipartisan 9-11 hearings boost domestic spying, powers of federal political police

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

A bipartisan push to expand domestic spying and victimization has gained momentum through the congressional intelligence hearings on the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The Democrats have taken the lead in using the hearings to boost "homeland defense," including through proposals to create a new post of "director of national intelligence" responsible to oversee all of the government's spy agencies.

U.S. secretary of homeland security Thomas Ridge announced April 19 that he is forming a new task force that "will work with industry, governors and local police to boost security at potential targets and

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Bush, Kerry back Tel Aviv's settlement plan

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. president George Bush and Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry have both endorsed Tel Aviv's plans to permanently maintain some of the largest Israeli settlements in the West Bank and to refuse the right of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees to return to their land. Bush announced his support at an April 14 press conference here with Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon.

Kerry immediately backed the Bush administration's stance. "What's important obviously is the security of the state of Israel, and that's what the prime minister [of Israel] and the president, I think, are trying to address," Kerry said.

Washington's position further emboldened the Israeli rulers in their drive to deal mortal blows to the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Three days later, Israeli helicopter gunships assassinated Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the central leader of the Palestinian organization Hamas. Rantisi had taken the place in the Hamas leadership of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, 67, who was killed March 22 by Israeli forces.

In response to Rantisi's assassination the Bush administration issued its standard

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ANC landslide in S. Africa election

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—The African National Congress (ANC) won a massive majority in South Africa's third nonracial general election since the overturn of apartheid rule a decade ago. Its support grew to nearly 70 percent of the vote in the April 14 poll, up from 63 percent in 1994 and 66 percent in 1999.

The election coincided with the 10th anniversary of the April 1994 nonracial, democratic election, which registered the burial of the white-minority apartheid regime following decades of mass struggle led by the ANC. About 76 percent of those registered to vote showed up at the polls. Some 15,861,000 people voted compared to just over 15,977,000 in 1999.

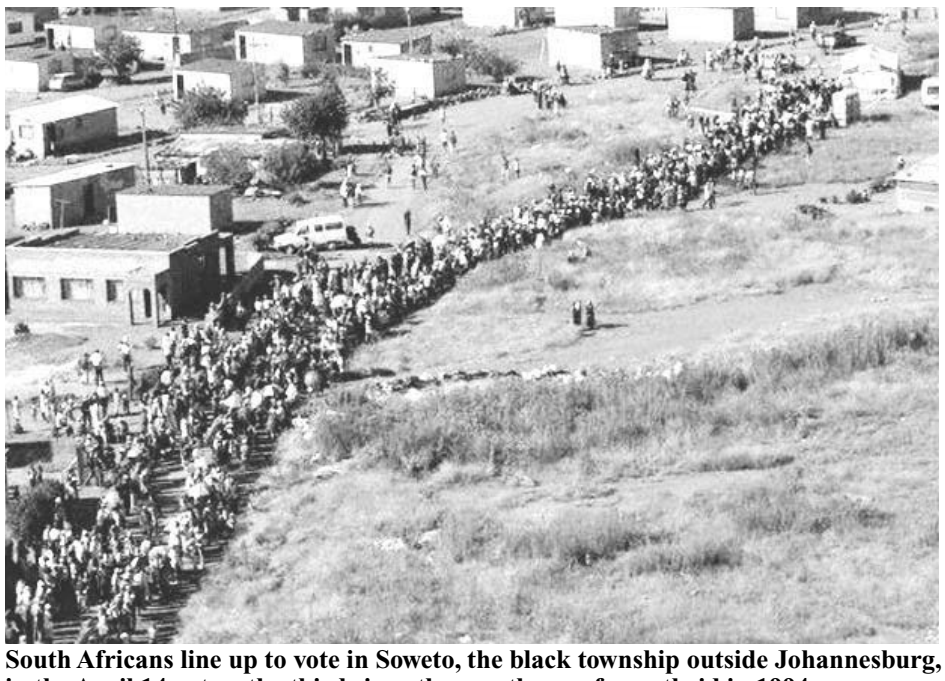
The scope of the ANC victory was rooted in the party's history as the standard-bearer in the battle against apartheid, and its non-racial program. As the ruling party for the last 10 years it has committed a large percentage of the state budget to meet basic needs in the poorest urban and rural areas—from building houses to electrification and water provision. This effort resounds with a growing section of the population.

The government's 2004 budget states that 1.6 million houses and 700 new clinics have been built since the ANC came to power. Nine million people have gained access to water and an additional four million homes are now supplied with electricity.

Unemployment, however, is 31 percent, according to government figures. Unofficial estimates put it as high as 40 percent.

The ANC's economic policies have also found favor with capitalists here. A great many wealthy companies and individuals now find it expedient to give it their support because the party is best placed to defend their investments and interests. The owners of the factories and mines have enjoyed a relatively stable economic environment for profit-making. Inflation, for example, has averaged about 7 percent since 1993, half of where it stood the previous decade.

Business support for the ANC found clear expression in the parade of major corporations that donated funds to political parties on a proportional basis. The ANC, being the largest party, received the largest hunk of the funding. So, for example, Anglo American Corporation donated 3 million rands (about $460,000) to the ANC's election coffers. Banks, telecommunications companies, and other mining houses did the same.



South Africans line up to vote in Soweto, the black township outside Johannesburg, in the April 14 vote—the third since the overthrow of apartheid in 1994.

This election witnessed the complete collapse of the New National Party, formerly the National Party—the party of apartheid. The NNP's support plummeted from 6.8 percent in 1999 to less than 2 percent. It has fashioned itself as a liberal party and for five years it has served in provincial and national coalition governments with the ANC.

In this election the NNP's supporters continued to flee into the arms of the rightist Democratic Alliance (DA), which calls itself the "official opposition." Largely as a result of this exodus from the NNP, the DA's support grew from 9.6 percent of the vote in 1999 to 12.4 percent this year.

Support for the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), whose backing has always been based on a Zulu nationalist appeal, continues to dwindle, including in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal province. The IFP's support dropped from 8.6 percent in 1999 to less than 7 percent this year.

Iceland gov't pushes bills to expand police powers

BY SIGURLAUG GUNNLAUGSDÓTTIR

REYKJAVIK, Iceland—Moving to further boost the powers of the Icelandic police, Minister of Justice Bjorn Bjarnason proposed new legislation at the end of March that would enable cops to deny attorneys access to material related to the defense of their arrested clients. The bill would also allow police to wiretap phones for 24 hours before being obliged to gain a court order to continue their snooping.

Over the last few years the Independence Party/Progressive Party government has introduced a series of measures reinforcing border controls and limiting the rights of immigrants. With this latest bill, they have begun increasing the latitude allowed cops in their "investigations."

The legislation would remove requirements for police officers' names to be listed in police reports. Cops can decide whether to videotape interrogations and how long to keep the tape if they do.

In a separate bill Bjarnason proposes strengthening forensics departments and centralizing police "technical data" into a national database.

The minister championed these measures before the National Police Association Congress April 13. He also spoke on the official formation—made public March 1—of a Special Force under the National Commission of the Icelandic Police, the official name for the State Police. Based on a special unit of the Reykjavik city police but tripling it in size, this force will be provided with the latest word in weapons and equipment.

Two opposition parties, the Social Democratic Coalition and the Left Greens, have accused Bjarnason of taking steps to build an army in a country that does not have an official armed forces. Bjarnason denied the charge, but said, "There is not always a sharp distinction between the special force and armed forces." Emphasizing the policing duties of the new unit, he told the *Frettabladid* newspaper that its responsibilities might include "dealing with riots and other specialized tasks."

Another bill lays the basis for more efficient surveillance and policing of immigrants in Iceland. Bjarnason has claimed that present laws allow too much leeway for marriages of convenience that make it possible for the foreign-born to gain a residency permit or citizenship.

Among the organizations lodging protests have been the Multicultural Council and WOMEN, an organization of foreign-born women based in Reykjavik. The bill discriminates against immigrants, a WOMEN representative said, and dictates how "people should get to know each other and establish a family."

The legislation would give police powers to search immigrants or their houses, without a court order, on suspicion of their having entered marriages of convenience. It stipulates that any person deported may be charged for the cost of their imprisonment. To cover these expenses, the individual's personal valuables can be confiscated.

When individuals apply for residence in Iceland to reunite with their families, the immigration office can demand genetic proof of kinship. Katla Thorsteinsdóttir, a lawyer who opposes the bill, said in a radio interview that applicants themselves would clearly have to pay for such tests.

The Social Democratic Coalition and the Left Greens have voiced opposition to these measures, although they support restrictions on the foreign-born.

Both parties joined the government in the flurry of "antiterror" propaganda following the March 11 Madrid train bombings—used in part to justify the increased police powers. While speaking against the Anglo-American invasion in Iraq, they back an intervention under UN cover.

Neither of the two parties has objected to the unremitting buildup of a so-called Icelandic peacekeeping force, which expands continuously, drawing ever-greater sums from the yearly state budget—from 110 million kronur in 2003 to 245 million kronur in 2004 (100 kronur = US$1.30). The peacekeeping troops have been the advance guard of the Icelandic rulers' increased involvement in imperialist military interventions abroad. Significantly, the government is included in the "coalition of the willing"—the list of 63 countries recognized by Washington as qualified to bid for reconstruction contracts in Iraq, on the grounds of their support for its occupation.

Icelandic so-called peacekeeping troops are active in other imperialist-led occupations. Having just handed the international airport in Pristina, Kosova, to United Nations troops, they are now preparing to take control of the international airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, by June 1. An Icelandic officer has been heading up the UN security apparatus in Liberia since last fall.

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Access to abortion

Continued from front page

right to choose (see front-page ad).

Dr. Morris Turner, Kisner's medical practice partner for 31 years, said in an interview with *Militant* reporters the first week of April that Kisner was a pioneer in extending the reach of family planning options for women and better medical care for African-American and other working people. "He set up free clinics in Pittsburgh and also in the Monongahela River Valley for ex-steelworkers who found themselves in dire circumstances," said Turner. "We trained nurse practitioners and a physician who would visit once or twice a week. These were mainly poor, white women. They were thrilled at having a caring physician."

Kisner was also instrumental in establishing the Allegheny Reproductive Health Center, which provides abortions, and was one of the first doctors to perform the procedure in Pittsburgh following the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 decision to decriminalize abortion in *Roe v. Wade*.

"Since 1973 there have been no other abortion providers outside Pittsburgh," Turner said. "Four clinics and our private practice service half a million women a year. Magee-Women' s Hospital is the only hospital today in Pittsburgh where abortions are provided."

Nationally, 95 percent of abortions today are performed in clinics or doctor's offices. When asked if he still sees cases of self-induced or other botched abortions, Turner said, "I saw cases as a resident before 1973. Late at night, women would come in from self-induced abortions. The watershed was legality in 1973. With the clinics available, even the Pennsylvania restrictions have not caused the same tragedies as the early years."

Restrictions passed into law in Pennsylvania in 1989 include requirements for a 24-hour waiting period after consent is given for the procedure, and parental consent for women under the age of 18. A requirement to notify the husband was struck down. "Throughout the fighting, we were hoping to make it safe for other physicians to provide abortions," said Turner. No young doctors have come forward here to continue to provide abortions to the women in this region, he said. "None have been willing to walk the gauntlet, to undergo the death threats. Somebody needs to hear that."

"Our clinic serves Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio, Northern West Virginia, and the panhandle of Maryland," said Claire Keyes, director of the Allegheny Reproductive Health Center, April 8. "Some patients come from 200 miles away because 87 percent of counties in Pennsylvania don't have abortion facilities."

"From the late '80s to the early '90s, Pittsburgh was a target for Operation Rescue," Keyes said, referring to the rightist outfit that organized a violent campaign in that period to shut down abortion providers. "They made their training videos here—how to shut down a clinic, how to block doors, etc. I hope I can say that the last incidence of violence here was 1992 when our windows were shot out."

Keyes said, however, that doctors who have referred patients from miles away "have had their tires slashed and received threats. Many have backed away from it." She said that a group called Medical Students for Choice has begun to make inroads on the host of obstacles in the way of doctors entering practice, such as lack of training in medical schools.

In 1993, volunteer defends Philadelphia abortion clinic targeted by rightists. An estimated 87 percent of counties nationwide have no abortion provider.

Limits to access nationwide

Attacks on the right to choose since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision have fallen most heavily on working-class women in the United States.

In a nationwide survey conducted in 2000, 87 percent of counties overall, and 97 percent of non-metropolitan—that is, largely rural—counties, had no provider. One study estimates that almost one in four having the operation travels 50 miles or more for services. This means that women must bear additional costs and delays on top of the expense of the abortion itself.

The 1976 Hyde Amendment denied Medicaid funding for abortion in most cases, and today only 21 states provide funding for it. The result is that some two-thirds of women pay for the procedure. Few are reimbursed by insurance.

Since 1982, the number of abortion providers in the United States has fallen by 37 percent. Several factors contribute to this shortage. One is lack of training. Students are graduating from medical school with little or no instruction in techniques, partly because only 5 percent of abortions happen in hospitals, where most medical students and residents are trained.

The National Abortion Federation (NAF) points out the predominance of private providers represents "a significant shift away from hospital provided care, which was far more common in the early years after the laws criminalizing abortion were struck down." A 2001 study found that barely 10 percent of hospitals provide abortions. The NAF concludes that this has a big impact on "women in rural areas where there are no abortion clinics," and working-class women "who depend on hospital emergency services for medical care."

More than one-half of all obstetrician/gynecologists who perform abortions are 50 or older. Many were pioneers whose commitment to safe, legal abortion was shaped by having witnessed the effects of botched illegal or self-induced abortions. Younger physicians have not been faced with the reality of unsafe abortion.

Turner said that many of the abortion providers in the first years after *Roe v. Wade* faced violence from anti-choice forces. "We were threatened, but instead of letting that deter Dr. Kisner, he became more determined," he said. Many of those who provided this care "were part of the political movement. We gave speeches and testified."

Even though the 1973 decriminalization of abortion remains the most important gain for a woman's right to choose, much ground needs to be retaken to make abortion safe, legal, and accessible for all women. The current provider shortage threatens women's reproductive health by leaving many women without a real choice.

La'Tasha Mayes is the local organizer for New Voices for Reproductive Justice of Pittsburgh.

Black farmers in Alabama press fight for land

BY BRIAN TAYLOR AND SUSAN LAMONT

LINDEN, Alabama—"What do we want?—Our money!" chanted a standing-room-only crowd at an April 5 meeting here sponsored by the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Inc. (BFAA, Inc.). The event drew farmers and supporters from counties across western Alabama to discuss how to win implementation of a 1999 consent decree between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and farmers who had filed a class-action lawsuit against the government for its racist lending practices and other policies.

BFAA, Inc., president Tom Burrell reviewed the history of this struggle, which won agreement from the government to reimburse farmers and their families in the *Pigford v. Glickman* case. In the 1999 settlement of the lawsuit—which was backed by the mobilization of thousands of farmers and their supporters in protests, meetings, and marches—the USDA admitted to a pattern of discrimination against Black farmers in lending practices and other services, causing many to lose their land.

The number of Black farmers in the United States fell from 900,000 in 1920 to 18,000 in 1998, the year before the consent decree was signed. In 1992, Blacks owned 1 percent of the farmland in the country, down from 14 percent in 1920.

The government agreed that if farmers met a minimum set of filing requirements they would receive $50,000 tax-free in compensation. This filing process, however, became an obstacle to many and thousands of farmers were denied their claims. Only 13,000 of the 22,000 who applied received payments of any kind, said Burrell, and only about $500 million of the money allocated for reimbursement has been used. The government "has only paid 13,000 folks, but has the money to pay another 50,000," he said.

The five-year statute of limitation placed on those wishing to file claims against the government expired the week following this farmers meeting.

"Most farmers, we are finding out, were not aware of the lawsuit, did not have time to apply by the deadline, or simply did not believe it was true" that the government was paying farmers, Burrell said. He explained that three categories of people eligible to apply for reimbursement did not know they could. This includes people who attempted to farm whether they succeeded or not, and their descendents. Leaders of BFAA, Inc., said the next step in the fight was to ask the courts for an extension of the deadline to allow for more applications to be filed. Farmers at the meeting seeking to file a claim were asked to fill out petition and questionnaire that would be used to make an argument for the extension. "Don't let anyone make you believe you are not entitled to your money!" said Burrell.

Build April 25 March on Washington

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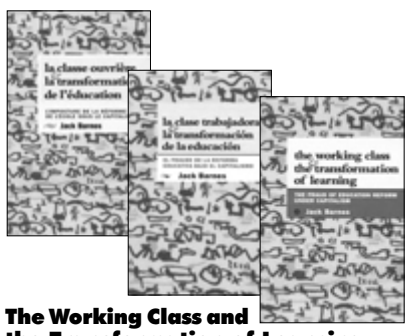

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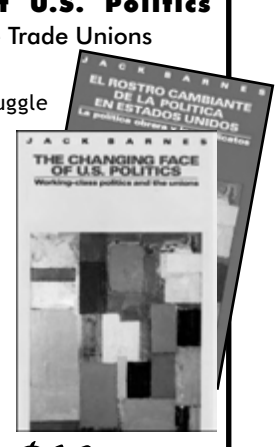

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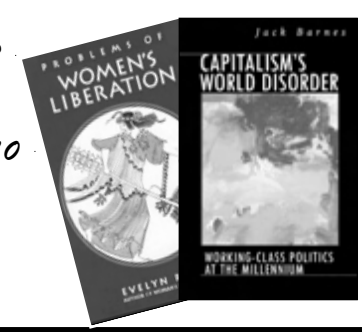

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Strikers vow to keep Co-op picket line

Utah 'Sun Advocate' covers miners' strike

Below are excerpts from an article in the *Sun Advocate*, published twice-weekly in Price, Utah. It appeared in the April 13 issue under the title, "Strikers vow to continue Co-op mine picket line." It is reprinted by permission.

BY RICHARD SHAW

Cars and trucks traveling the canyon continue to pass by the picketing Co-op miners. Many drivers respond to a picket sign and honk horns in support of the miners. Other vehicles buzz silently past the picket line, turn right and head to the mine.

"We've now been standing here for over six months," points out Allison Kennedy, referring to the strike or lockout that began Sept. 22, 2003. "And we'll be here as long as it takes."

Both sides have engaged in a war of words through the media since the labor action started. The work stoppage has not only gained statewide coverage by the television stations and in newspapers across Utah, but national attention has been brought to the situation primarily through the efforts of the United Mine Workers of America. The UMWA attempted to organize the mine workers when the stoppage began.

Adding to the media's interest is the fact that Co-op or CW Mining is owned by the Kingstons, one of Utah's most well-known polygamous families. High-profile cases involving polygamy have resulted in a media spotlight on what would normally be considered as a small labor dispute.

"We have had support from all over Utah," states Kennedy. "And a great deal from many places around the United States as well."

In February, buses and numerous vehicles came to the small corner where Huntington Canyon and Bear Canyon join and where the picketers stand day in and day out.

The buses and vehicles brought dozens of supporters from various labor organizations as well as human rights groups. But the call to support the picketers has gone farther than union groups. Religious organizations, women and family advocates as well as Latino support groups have joined the effort.

The headquarters for the Co-op picketers consists of a shed plastered with signs erected on one corner of the intersection.

During the winter, an old mobile home was moved onto the opposite corner so the picketers could get out of the cold weather conditions.

"You ought to have seen us huddling in that trailer to keep warm this winter," comments Kennedy.

But despite being held up in the mobile, they continued a presence on the corner all winter, 24 hours a day, seven days a week....

The situation has become a dispute for both sides of the issue. Picketers claim that they have talked a number of people into not going to the mine, including some individuals who make deliveries to the facility.

"One day, a driver stopped by and told us that he was a teamster and he wouldn't be crossing our picket line anymore to make deliveries his company had for the mine," indicates Kennedy. "Now, he drops their stuff off at the convenience store in Huntington and calls them up and tells them that he had left the delivery there. They have to go down and pick it up."

But there have also been failures. A driver for different company apparently stopped and talked with picketers one day and told the workers he would not continue to deliver to the mine. But a few days later, the driver apparently delivered some materials for the mine.

"He stopped on the way back and told us his boss said he either made deliveries to the mine or he could look for another job," explains Kennedy.

Picketers also claim they are frequently visited by the Emery County Sheriff's Office because the mine calls the department and complains.

As the Sun Advocate arrived at the picket line to conduct interviews, an Emery law enforcement cruiser was pulling away from the site. Kennedy said the officer indicated that a complaint had been made claiming the strikers were in the roadway harassing traffic.

"I think it was because we were on the road talking to someone who stopped and wanted to talk to us," notes Kennedy.

While the *Sun Advocate* was at the site, a small car came down Bear Canyon with two men inside the vehicle. The car stopped and the passenger videotaped the strikers, a supporter talking to the picketers and the newspaper reporter.

"They've actually done that a number of times," points out [striker Bill] Estrada. "I'm not sure why. I think they just want to be sure they know who is here doing this from time to time."

Numerous miners involved in the picketing process do not speak English and Estrada has to interpret for the workers.

For example, Juan Salazar has worked in the mine for three years. Standing on the line with Jesus Salazar and Sergio Ponce, who also speak English, he said that the fight is for more than money or working conditions.

"I believe in what we are doing," states Salazar. "This has become a fight for respect and dignity."

"It's very hard," explains Salazar, discussing how he and his family are making ends meet without a job. "But, together, we are moving on...."

CW Mining's practices have been under investigation by the National Labor Relations Board since the strike began, but no decision has been rendered....

The miners contend the company is interfering with the workers' right to organize and the present union at the mine is a company run labor organization. But even if the NLRB comes down in favor of the miners, no one knows what weight the decision will carry since the federal agency's findings are often sent to a company with a request to mitigate the problem. If a company fails to act on the request, the NLRB can take other action.

"We've got support from the UMWA all over the west," points out Estrada. "Another mine that was on strike even sent us help. How can we give up with so many people behind us and our cause?"

Garment workers at Point Blank in Florida win union recognition and first contract

Militant/Nicole Sarmiento

OAKLAND PARK, Florida—Workers signed their first contract April 19 at Point Blank Body Armor in Oakland Park, Florida, north of Miami, winning union recognition for the UNITE union after a fight lasting more than two years. The contract takes effect April 24.

Some 175 garment workers struck the plant for six months in 2002 and 2003, demanding union recognition and improved working conditions. In February 2003 the National Labor Relations Board ordered the company to take back the strikers and reinstate three workers it had fired in an attempt to intimidate workers pushing for union representation. Back at work after that victory, unionists continued to demonstrate their strength by holding meetings in front of the plant, organizing red UNITE T-shirt days, and giving support to other workers in struggle.

Milagros Santos, a union activist and sewing machine operator who was part of the strike, said, "This is a big step forward. And we know we will be more prepared to win even more in the future."

More detailed coverage on this victory will appear in next week's *Militant*.

—SETH GALINSKY

Utah miners defeat picket trailer ban

Continued from front page

and a UMWA representative met with officials of the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In the end, they secured the reversal of a March 30 order to remove the trailer from the picket line on the side of State Route 31 near the entrance to the mine.

Prior to those meetings the strikers had been told by both state agencies to clear everything off the picket line, including their picket trailer, toilet facility, picket shack, and signs. UDOT spokesman Tom Hudachko claimed the trailer and a number of parked cars obstruct the view of passing motorists. The strikers countered that for six months they heard no complaints about their picket trailer, which they had used as shelter against the cold winds and snow during the winter months.

As a brief news item in the April 13 *Salt Lake Tribune* put it, "Hudachko said the state also recently heard from the Bureau of Land Management that the trailer is on BLM land and—although it apparently took five months to bother the BLM—the trailer can't stay."

At the April 13 meeting, a UDOT official told the strikers and their supporters that it was no longer in the hands of his department to issue permits and that all previous ones had been given out in error, workers said. The same UDOT official had sent the UMWA a certified letter, which the union had received the previous day, stating, "Since UDOT is responsible for compliance with the terms of the BLM Right of Way Grant, you are hereby ordered to remove all trailers, buildings, and other items which have been placed in the UDOT Right of Way.… You are hereby given 10 days to remove the installation and clean up the Right of Way."

The official insisted the picket trailer had to go by April 14. He also acknowledged that the UDOT had received more than 40 phone calls, including from out of state, in protest of him revoking the trailer permit.

The delegation of strikers and supporters met later that afternoon with a Bureau of Land Management representative. This official initially maintained the same position as the Department of Transportation, workers reported, saying that the agency does not allow use of land under their jurisdiction except for maintenance and operations of the highway.

Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Utah miners on strike at the Co-Op mine in Huntington and their supporters celebrate the successful defense of their picket trailer at an April 18 barbecue.

The strikers explained the importance of their strike and how big a blow it would be to their struggle if the company could push through the revocation of the trailer permit and weaken their picket line. Finally, the BLM officer said she would issue a letter for casual use of the land for the strikers' shack, signs, and toilet if they replaced the picket trailer with a smaller one. The strikers agreed.

On April 15, officials from both state agencies visited the picket line to inspect the grounds and said they found everything in order. Strikers reported that before leaving the BLM official told about a dozen strikers and their supporters that they can continue picketing as before—keeping the larger trailer on the site until they replace it with a smaller camper. The agency promised to issue a letter to the strikers giving them permission to keep picketing on BLM land once the UMWA submits a written proposal.

The strikers celebrated this victory with supporters from nearby communities by organizing an April 18 cookout at the picket line.

While these events were unfolding, the strike and the struggle around the picket trailer received increased coverage in the local press. In addition to reports in the *Salt Lake Tribune,* the *Sun Advocate*, the main paper in Carbon County, published a front-page article titled, "Strikers vow to continue Co-Op mine picket line." (See above.)

Send financial donations and letters of support to: Co-Op Miners, c/o UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, UT 84501. Earmark Checks to the Co-Op Miners' Fund.

‘Militant’ sales campaign nears 1,000 subscriptions

BY PAUL PEDERSON

On April 18 *Militant* supporters from Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia took the socialist press to the region along the border of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia—called Delmarva—where thousands of workers at several giant poultry processing plants live and work.

“We stopped at a trailer park near the Perdue plant in Georgetown, Delaware, where a number of the workers live,” said Janice Lynn, from Washington D.C. “They are trying to bring the union into this plant, which has a workforce of 1,000.

“During our visit, seven signed up for subscriptions: five to *Perspectiva Mundial* and two to the *Militant,*” Lynn said. “One new subscriber, originally from Haiti, told us he was a strong supporter of the union-organizing campaign. He bought the French-language editions of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes and *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara. A junior high school student whose mother subscribed to *Perspectiva Mundial* told us she had heard about the women’s rights march on Washington April 25 at her school and was hoping to attend.”

Special sales efforts like these have brought in nearly 1,000 subscriptions to the *Militant* and more than 250 to the Spanish-language monthly socialist magazine in the first half of the eight-week international subscription drive. (See chart on this page.)

Partisans of the socialist press are gearing up for an all-out effort to get socialist books, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers into the hands of the hundreds of thousands who will march on April 25 in Washington, D.C., to defend a woman’s right to choose abortion. In planning meetings, at protests, and at Militant Labor Forums many who are building for this march have responded enthusiastically to the books and pamphlets offered in the April 25 March on Washington Pathfinder Supersaver Sale.

At an April 16 forum on the fight to defend abortion rights in Houston, two panelists—Alicia Nuzzie, an organizer for the National Abortion Rights Action League, and Leigh Fernandez, who is organizing a support rally in Houston for the April 25 national abortion rights action—bought *Militant* subscriptions and 10 Pathfinder books and pamphlets between them. “Of all the books I purchased I’m most interested in reading *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women,* followed by the *Communist Manifesto,*” said Fernandez. “*To Speak the Truth* is a gift for a friend of mine and he’s very excited about reading this,” she added.

Houston campaigners regularly set up a literature table at Prairie View A&M University, one of the state’s oldest Black colleges, located about 40 miles northwest of Houston. Dozens of students there have bought books or signed up to receive the *Militant*.

Special visits and phone calls to readers about renewing their subscriptions have accounted for nearly one-third of the subs sold so far in Houston, along with dozens of books, said Jacquie Henderson.

Militant/Brian Williams

Sales of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial* and revolutionary books at A&M University in Prairie View, Texas, 40 miles outside Houston.

One of these renewals came from oil worker B.J. Case, who said she hasn’t received the paper for several years. “I remember how the *Militant* stood by us when we were locked out by Crown Petroleum,” she told Henderson. “With what is happening in the world now I think I need to get it again.”

After reading a couple of issues of her six-month subscription, Case purchased *Capitalism’s World Disorder, The Changing Face of U.S. Politics,* and *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*—all by Jack Barnes, and all chosen from the Supersaver Sale advertisement, published as a supplement to the *Militant*—along with *Palestine and the Arabs’ Fight for Liberation* by Fred Feldman and Georges Sayad. She also made a welcome contribution towards the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* international fund drive.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Spring Subscription Drive March 20–May 17: Week 4 of 8

	Militant			PM	
Country	**Goal**	**Sold**	**%**	**Goal**	**Sold**
NEW ZEALAND					
Christchurch	**20**	**17**	**85%**	**1**	**0**
Auckland	25	12	48%	1	0
N.Z. total	**45**	**29**	**64%**	**2**	**0**
UNITED KINGDOM					
Edinburgh	**20**	**13**	**65%**		
London	**50**	**27**	**54%**	**10**	**3**
UK total	**70**	**40**	**57%**	**10**	**3**
UNITED STATES					
Omaha	**50**	**44**	**88%**	**40**	**32**
Des Moines	**50**	**35**	**70%**	**25**	**15**
Houston	**55**	**36**	**65%**	**15**	**7**
New York	**200**	**127**	**64%**	**60**	**28**
Twin Cities	**75**	**46**	**61%**	**35**	**16**
Boston	**85**	**50**	**59%**	**50**	**18**
Atlanta	**55**	**32**	**58%**	**20**	**3**
Philadelphia	**60**	**33**	**55%**	**10**	**3**
Washington	**65**	**35**	**54%**	**20**	**7**
San Francisco	**120**	**63**	**53%**	**40**	**11**
Chicago	**100**	**51**	**51%**	**35**	**17**
Birmingham	**30**	**15**	**50%**	**8**	**2**
Newark	110	54	49%	35	13
Miami	70	33	47%	18	10
NE Pennsylvania	45	21	47%	10	3
Los Angeles	135	59	44%	50	18
Utah	30	13	43%	15	11
Tampa	30	13	43%	10	3
Pittsburgh	50	20	40%	3	1
Detroit	50	18	36%	8	1
Seattle	60	19	32%	10	2
Western Col.	30	9	30%	15	3
Cleveland	30	8	27%	8	3
U.S. total	**1585**	**834**	**53%**	**540**	**227**
AUSTRALIA	**45**	**23**	**51%**	**7**	**3**
ICELAND	18	8	44%	1	0
SWEDEN					
Gothenburg	**14**	**7**	**50%**	**4**	**2**
Stockholm	15	4	27%	8	1
SWEDEN Total	29	11	38%	12	2
CANADA					
Montreal	25	11	44%	10	3
Vancouver	60	21	35%	9	5
Toronto	50	12	24%	7	9
CANADA total	135	44	33%	26	17
Int’l totals	**1927**	**989**	**49%**	**598**	**252**
Goal/Should be	**2000**	**1000**	**50%**	**600**	**300**

IN THE UNIONS

	Militant			PM	
Country	**Goal**	**Sold**	**%**	**Goal**	**Sold**
AUSTRALIA					
AMIEU	10	4	40%		
UNITED STATES					
UMWA	50	22	44%	12	7
UFCW	110	46	42%	123	75
UNITE	50	13	26%	40	17
Total	210	81	39%	175	99
CANADA					
UFCW	13	4	31%	5	1
UNITE	9	0	0%	5	1
Total	22	4	18%	10	2
NEW ZEALAND					
NDU	2	0	0%	1	0
MWU	2	0	0%		
Total	4	0	0%	1	0
SWEDEN					
Livs	4	0	0%	1	0

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees’ Union; LIVS—Food Workers Union; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America.

‘Militant’ supporters pick up fund drive pace

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

Partisans of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* from 19 cities sent in $12,400 over the past week for the spring fund drive, the highest weekly collection to date at the half point of the eight-week fund-raising campaign.

Leading the way toward the $85,000 goal were supporters in Tampa, New York, and Detroit—the three cities at the top of this week’s chart—who made qualitative progress through fund-raising meetings during the April 17-18 weekend.

Olga Rodríguez, the fund director in New York, told the *Militant* that more than 50 people filled the Socialist Workers Party hall for the April 16 Militant Labor Forum there. Titled “Why Washington Has Venezuela in its Gun Sights,” the meeting featured a slide presentation by *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis, based on a recent reporting trip to Venezuela.

The gathering started with an exquisite dinner, which included *cochinita pibil* (roast pork Yucatan style) and other delicious dishes, Malapanis said.

“After Young Socialists member Pete Muser explained the importance of the fund, we passed the hat around, and participants put in more than $2,000,” said Rodríguez. The collection netted $400 in new pledges.

Fund meetings in Miami and Tampa also addressed the ongoing class confrontation in Venezuela between workers and farmers, on one hand, and big businessmen, on the other, who are backed by Washington and are campaigning to oust the elected government of President Hugo Chávez. *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel spoke at both events, titled, “Venezuela and the Crisis in Latin America—U.S. Imperialism Escalates Its Intervention.”

Three workers from Point Blank Body Armor, where unionists have waged a two-year fight for recognition of the UNITE union (see photo box on page 4), were among those who packed the Militant Labor Forum hall in Miami’s Little Haiti April 17, Koppel said. Also attending were members of the Bolivarian Circle, a Venezuelan organization there, and Haitians who have organized protests against Washington’s recent coup in Haiti.

The wide-ranging discussion “included questions on the lessons for Venezuela of the 1973 military coup in Chile, and the stance that working people should take in the coming U.S. elections,” said Koppel. Nearly $600 was collected for the fund.

Participants in the Tampa meeting the next day, who included three students and one campus worker from the University of South Florida, contributed $500.

Those attending similar meetings in Detroit and Los Angeles eclipsed those efforts. The collection at the Detroit event gave speaker Paul Pederson, a staff writer for the *Militant*, more than $1,000 to bring back to New York to help cover the expenses of publishing the socialist press. Pederson, who visited the West Bank and Israel in March as part of a solidarity delegation organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, gave a presentation titled, “Palestinians Resist the Israeli Regime’s Military Boot.”

At the Los Angeles event, featuring Socialist Workers Party leader Dennis Richter, more than $3,000 was collected or pledged.

Fund campaigners can take their cue from these events, which based their success on a broad effort to reach out to all partisans of the socialist periodicals. With this kind of approach, the $85,000 fund can be brought on schedule with diligent and steady work during each of the remaining four weeks, down to the finish line.

$85,000 Militant/PM Fund March 20—May 17: Week 4 of 8

	Goal	Paid	%
Tampa	**1,300**	**980**	**75%**
New York	**11,000**	**5,700**	**52%**
Detroit	**3,000**	**1,495**	**50%**
Houston	3,500	1,305	37%
Philadelphia	3,300	1,114	34%
Miami	1,700	570	34%
Twin Cities	4,000	1,180	30%
Birmingham	2,000	575	29%
Northeast	1,600	450	28%
Utah	1,500	400	27%
Los Angeles	8,000	2,010	25%
Newark	3,500	850	24%
Omaha	440	95	22%
Boston	3,000	555	19%
Seattle	6,000	965	16%
Cleveland	1,200	190	16%
Des Moines	1,100	150	14%
Washington DC	2,800	300	11%
Atlanta	5,000	535	11%
San Francisco	8,500	845	10%
Chicago	5,000	300	6%
Pittsburgh	3,800	200	5%
Western Col.	2,000	0	0%
U.S. Total	83,240	20,764	25%
New Zealand	1,600	385	24%
United Kingdom	1,000	20	2%
Canada	5,000	10	0%
Australia	1,500	0	0%
France	300	0	0%
Iceland	200	0	0%
Sweden	500	0	0%
Other		810	
Int’l Total	**93,340**	**21,989**	**26%**
Goal/Should be	**85,000**	**42,500**	**50%**

Cuban leaders assessed failure of '58 strike

Shifted center of July 26 Movement leadership from cities to Sierra Maestra

Reprinted below is a selection from *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, by Armando Hart, recently published by Pathfinder Press in English and Spanish editions. Hart, who is one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, was a central organizer of the urban underground during the Cuban revolutionary struggle.

This week's selection—one of a series published in the *Militant* over the past three months—was written especially for *Aldabonazo*. The article by Luis Buch, a veteran revolutionary and prominent member of the July 26 Movement, appears as one of several documents appended to Chapter 8. Titled, "The meeting at Altos de Mompié," it describes an historic May 1958 meeting in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba of the July 26 Movement's National Directorate. Copyright © 2004 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

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BY LUIS BUCH

…At 9:30 a.m. I contacted Yeyé [Haydée Santamaría]. When I told her that I had worked out the details of my departure, she asked: "Why don't you go to the Boniato jail and visit Armando?" I told her that wouldn't be possible since I had to be at the airport at 11:00.

"There's no problem," she said to me. "Everything will be taken care of. In a few minutes, there will be a car there to take you to Boniato, and afterward to the airport. It's very important that Armando knows of the Mompié agreements. Since you're a lawyer, you can identify yourself as such, and you'll surely be able to see him without any difficulty."

So we went to the Boniato jail, I showed my lawyer's card and asked to see the inmate Armando Hart. Within a few minutes they brought him out accompanied by a sergeant. The interview was held standing up, with the guard moving away discreetly. I was able to explain to him in a few minutes the agreements and the other things that happened during the Altos de Mompié meeting, as well as the motives of my trip and Yeyé's.

I told Armando that the meeting began at 6:00 a.m. on May 3, 1958, in the hut of the Mompié family. Attending it were the following compañeros: Fidel (Alejandro), who chaired it; Ernesto Guevara (Ché); Faustino Pérez (Ariel); René Ramos Latour (Daniel); Vilma Espín (Débora); Celia Sánchez (Aly); Marcelo Fernández (Zoilo); Antonio Torres (Ñico); Haydée Santamaría (María); David Salvador (Mario); and me (Roque). Enzo Infante (Bruno) arrived at noon.

Celia took the minutes.

We began with a critical and detailed analysis of the failure of the April strike.

The main agreements were the following:

To unify the July 26 Movement under a single leadership exercised by an executive committee to be located in the Sierra, and whose general secretary would be Fidel. All the weapons and other instruments of war and explosives would be sent to the General Command Post. From there they would be distributed in accordance with the coordinated actions projected. A united leadership of the war under the immediate leadership of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro was established.

Faustino Pérez would rejoin the Sierra with the rank of commander. Delio Ochoa was named coordinator in Havana.

Marcelo Fernández gave a detailed report on the Movement's organization and activities in each of the provinces and important municipalities. He also talked about the Civic Resistance Movement and efforts to broaden and strengthen it.

He was assigned to draft a document going over the meeting's results and agreements, so that they would become known at all levels of the Movement.

Marcelo was to continue in his post until a new assignment was made.

René Ramos Latour was to be reincorporated into the Rebel Army with the same rank of commander that he held in the militias.

Haydée was to go abroad to take charge of the organization's finances.

It was agreed that Fidel would address the exiles and émigrés to call for order and discipline in carrying out the work they were responsible for abroad. The July 26 Movement Committee in Exile was recognized as the only official body.

I was to go abroad with precise instructions for Urrutia. I would be the only one of those abroad who would have the code to decipher messages, and I would be responsible for public relations. Toward that end I was to maintain political contacts with foreign governments, and especially I was to work to expedite receipt of the armaments promised by Venezuelan president Larrazábal.

With reports coming in of movement by enemy troops with equipment of all types, which foreshadowed upcoming battles, the meeting of the National Directorate in Mompié ended.

It was Sunday, and Fidel ordered that the first ones to descend would be Haydée and me. Since we had to depart for abroad to fulfill the missions we had each been given, it was decided we should run the least risk.

Granma

Rebel Army troops at Altos de Conrado in Sierra Maestra mountains in 1958, where Fidel Castro spoke on Radio Rebelde following failure of April 9 general strike.

Bush, Kerry back Tel Aviv settlement plan

Continued from front page

statement of "concern," calling on Tel Aviv to "consider the consequences of its actions."

During an April 18 interview on NBC TV's "Meet the Press," on the other hand, Kerry fully backed Tel Aviv's murder. Asked if he supported Rantisi's assassination, Kerry said, "I believe Israel has every right in the world to respond to any act of terror against it." He labeled Hamas a "terrorist, brutal organization," and said that the group "has had years to make up its mind to take part in a peaceful process. They refuse to…and I support Israel's efforts to try to separate itself and to try to be secure."

During that program, interviewer Timothy Russert asked Kerry whether he supported Bush's stand on the Israeli settlements. Kerry answered, "Yes."

"Completely?" asked Russert. "Yes," replied Kerry.

Meanwhile, thousands of Palestinians took to the streets in the occupied territories to protest Rantisi's execution.

Israeli foreign ministry spokesperson Gideon Meir bluntly stated that this was not Tel Aviv's first attempt on Rantisi's life. "We tried to do it a few months ago," he said. "This time we got him."

Rantisi's murder builds on Tel Aviv's escalating assaults on Palestinians over the recent months, for which the Zionist regime has been getting a green light from Washington. In March alone, Israeli forces killed 73 Palestinians and demolished 118 of their homes, according to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights.

Under Sharon's "disengagement plan," Tel Aviv would withdraw all of an estimated 7,500 Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip along with military outposts, getting rid of the headache of trying to administer Gaza, while maintaining control of its borders, airport, and seaport.

Tel Aviv will also reportedly annex five large settlement complexes in the West Bank. These have been growing rapidly over the last decades into what Bush described as "large population centers," approaching the size of cities in some cases. The five settlements now house some 55,000 people out of a total of 230,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

The settlements of Givat Zeev and Maaleh Adumim—with 10,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, respectively—are north and east of Jerusalem. Ariel, with 18,000, Kiryat Arba, with 4,000, and the smaller Hebron enclave of 500 are deep inside the West Bank. Their annexation, and the roads connecting them, would make a contiguous Palestinian territory impossible to achieve.

Sharon aide Raanan Gissan said the fate of the remaining 140 settlements in the West Bank would be decided in future negotiations.

Former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is currently finance minister, said Israel could now "fortify our hold" on settlements in the West Bank. He told Israeli radio that he would approve tens of millions of dollars for the settlements that would not be inside the miles-long "security wall" Tel Aviv is building. That wall cuts through the West Bank, virtually separating entire Palestinian villages.

The plan would also deny Palestinians the right to return to lands they were driven from leading up to and following the establishment of the state of Israel. These refugees would only be allowed to return to the Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza.

Bush's decision to back the plan gave a green light to Tel Aviv to continue its attacks on the Palestinian people under the banner of a "war on terrorism"—the code phrase used by imperialist powers from Washington to London and Paris to step up military intervention abroad and attacks on workers rights' at home. In his opening remarks at the April 14 joint press conference, Sharon praised Bush for his "courageous leadership in the war against global terror."

As Sharon looked on, Bush called the Israeli government proposal "historic and courageous."Alluding to the administration's so-called "road map to peace" in the Middle East, Bush told reporters, "There is a process that got stuck," and "the Prime Minister steps up and leads."

The U.S.-promoted proposal, which received support from European Union and United Nations representatives, aimed to derail the Palestinian struggle for self-determination with the promise of a Palestinian state in 2005 in exchange for a guarantee of the security of the Israeli settler-state.

Palestinian Authority (PA) leaders spoke out against Sharon's plan. "The Palestinian people will not give up seeking their freedom and independence and a state with Jerusalem as its capital," said PA president Yasir Arafat.

Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia said, "These issues can be resolved only in the final status negotiations and by a decision by the Palestinian leadership."

Speaking on behalf of the EU presidency, Irish foreign minister Brian Cowen opposed the proposal, saying, "The European Union will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties." The West Bank and Gaza Strip were seized by Tel Aviv in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

"We welcome the Israeli proposal to disengage from the Gaza and parts of the West Bank," said British prime minister Anthony Blair in a joint press conference with Bush on April 16. Blair did not join the U.S. president, however, in openly endorsing Tel Aviv's opposition to the Palestinian people's right of return, or Sharon's insistence on maintaining the West Bank settlements.

Justifying the shift in Washington's public stance, Bush told the April 14 press conference that it is "unrealistic" for Palestinians to return to their lands "in light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers." A final resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue would only permit their settling in a Palestinian state, he said, "rather than Israel."

Until now all "peace initiatives" proposed by the imperialist powers have refrained from explicitly denying the right to return. While Washington's public stance has been to oppose the settlements, successive U.S. administrations turned a blind eye to their expansion over decades and de facto backed them through uninterrupted aid to Tel Aviv.

Sharon's proposal to withdraw from the Gaza settlements and close down a few in the West Bank has drawn opposition from right-wing settlers. Among protesters gathered outside his residence in Israel on the same day as the White House press conference, one sign read, "Transfer Sharon, not settlements." Sharon's Likud Party has not yet voted on the proposal.

Pouring scorn on these critics, Sharon told columnists for the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* that Palestinians "have a better understanding" of the significance of Bush's shift "than most Israelis. I said that we were going to deal [the Palestinians] a lethal blow, and they were dealt a lethal blow."

Within hours of the press conference

Continued on Page 7

New from Pathfinder

Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58

by Armando Hart

In this firsthand account by one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, we meet many of the men and women who in the 1950s led the urban underground in the fight against the brutal U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Together with their comrades-in-arms of the Rebel Army, they not only brought down the tyranny, their revolutionary actions and example worldwide changed the history of the 20th century—and the century to come. $25.00

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Offensive in Iraq

Continued from front page
out of Iraq."

In the first three weeks of April, U.S. troops killed at least 1,100 Iraqis, according to the Associated Press, in an offensive aimed at defeating al-Sadr's group and insurgents in Fallujah, which was a base of the Baath party under the Saddam Hussein regime. Pentagon officials say that during the same period, U.S. forces took 100 deaths, the highest figure in any month since the U.S.-led invasion of the country a year ago.

About 2,500 U.S. troops have surrounded Najaf, which has been held for more than a week by the Mahdi militia. Representatives of the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council and Iranian diplomats have been trying to negotiate some form of surrender by al-Sadr, who has been declared an "outlaw" by the occupation regime.

Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said April 16, "At some point somebody has to make a decision on what we're going to do, and we certainly can't rule out the use of force."

By shutting down a newspaper associated with al-Sadr, arresting one of his prominent followers, and announcing their plans to capture or kill the cleric himself, U.S. commanders provoked the clashes with al-Sadr and his followers.

The Marine assault on Fallujah was prepared by a propaganda campaign aimed at drumming up public support for the operation, which has the stated goal of capturing those who killed and mutilated the bodies of four security guards in the city. The four had been employed by the U.S. firm Blackwater, which provides paramilitary goons around the world.

In response to these aggressive forays, U.S. officials admit, fighting broke out on a larger scale and in more locations than they had predicted. U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld said April 15, "I certainly would not have estimated that we would have had the number of individuals lost that we have lost in the last week."

Rumsfeld announced that the tour of duty of 20,000 U.S. troops would be extended for three months. Earlier, Bush had given the go-ahead for military commanders to assign around 10,000 more troops to the occupation.

Bush used his summit with Blair and the earlier news conference to emphasize once again that Washington puts no timetable on the occupation. He rejected assertions by liberal critics of the administration's course that there is a popular uprising in Iraq. "The violence we have seen is a power grab by the extreme and ruthless elements," he said April 13. "It's not a civil war. It's not a popular uprising. Most of Iraq is stable."

In a moment of unveiled imperialist arrogance Bush said, "Now is the time, and Iraq is the place, in which the enemies of the civilized world are testing the will of the civilized world." Should Washington "waver," he said, "every enemy of America in the world would celebrate, proclaiming our weakness and decadence, and using that victory to recruit a new generation of killers."

Diplomacy fails in Najaf

Meanwhile, an Iranian diplomatic delegation visited Najaf where Muqtada al-Sadr is said to be staying, but did not meet with him. The *Boston Globe* reported that Iranian and U.S. officials have been holding behind-the-scenes communications to resolve the standoff in Najaf, a center of Shiite Muslims, who are the majority in Iraq. Iran's foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi said, however, that the talks with U.S. officials in Iraq have been "going nowhere."

According to the *Financial Times,* Dan Senor, a spokesman for Paul Bremer, the head of the occupation regime, said, "There is no role for the Iranians to play middleman between us and Sadr."

Al-Sadr gave the go-ahead to his followers, organized in the Mahdi Army, to stage the uprising after the provocative closure of the newspaper and arrest of his aide. Spanish troops shot and killed at least 20 people who protested the arrest in Najaf. Within a few days, the Mahdi Army was forced to withdraw from the city of Kut, which it had captured from Ukrainian troops, and from police stations and government offices in a couple of other southern cities.

Al-Sadr has won a following in Iraq as an outspoken opponent of the U.S. occupation. He has refused to recognize the Iraqi Governing Council and compares Bremer to Saddam Hussein. Speaking in Kufa, on the outskirts of Najaf, al-Sadr continued to denounce the occupation, saying, "I say that they are here to stay and will occupy us for many years and as such compromise will not work," according to an April 16 report by the Al-Jazeera news service.

That same day Al-Jazeera also reported that a spokesman for Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the leading Shia cleric, had warned U.S. troops not to enter the Shiite centers of Karbala and Najaf.

Abductions by insurgents of foreigners from countries with troops joining in the occupation have not forced a retreat by any of the participating governments. The Italian government has said its troops will remain despite the release of a video showing the execution of an Italian citizen working as a security guard.

Following the release of three Japanese hostages, Japan's prime minister Junichiro Koizumi reiterated that Japanese troops would remain. Hundreds demonstrated outside Koizumi's Tokyo office demanding their withdrawal following the hostage-taking.

In January Japan began the deployment of up to 1,000 troops to southern Iraq to join the U.S.-led occupation. Aimed at strengthening the capacity of Japanese imperialism to defend its interests around the world, this was Tokyo's first step since World War II to deploy troops abroad into potential combat situations.

Commenting on the deployment, Japanese defense minister Shigeru Ishiba noted that Tokyo gets 90 percent of its oil from the Middle East, the largest percentage of any single country. "The reason we can lead such an affluent life, such as using electricity to this extent, driving cars as much as we like, avoiding the cold, and having fruit in winter, is because we have a stable oil supply from the Middle East, isn't it?" he said.

Reuters/Laszlo Balogh

U.S. soldiers on the outskirts of Najaf, April 18, poised to drive into the city against supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr. The other major front of the U.S. offensive is Fallujah in the north.

'Silent war' near Syrian border

Meanwhile, Washington "has been fighting what officials term a silent war with Syria which killed at least five [U.S.] soldiers over the weekend," reported the April 19 online edition of the *World Tribune.com*.

The article said that U.S. Marines have deployed along the Syrian border to stop the flow of insurgents and equipment into Iraq. The Marines there have reportedly fought against both Sunni Muslim insurgents and Syrian security personnel in clashes that have intensified in recent weeks.

The U.S. military deployments—increased by more than a third over the last two months—were focused on the western Iraqi towns of Al Qaim and Qusaybah, "regarded as key points in the smuggling of insurgents and weapons from Syria to Iraq," the *Tribune.com* report said.

U.S. officials acknowledged that at least five U.S. soldiers of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, who replaced the 82nd Airborne Division, were killed in battle with 150 insurgents in Husaybah during the April 17-18 weekend, according to *Middle East Newsline*.

Maj. Gen. John Sattler, director of operations for the U.S. Central Command, said in an April 16 news briefing that the Marines have deployed a quick reaction force that includes helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft for attacks along the Syrian border, according to the *Tribune.com*. Sattler claimed that insurgents infiltrate into that area from Syria and then move on to Ramadi and Fallujah, where U.S. troops have recently waged major offensives, and some of them eventually make their way to Baghdad.

"U.S. officials said that despite numerous warnings Syria continues to allow Al Qaida-aligned insurgents to enter Iraq," the article claimed, in a sign of what Washington is preparing to do vis-à-vis Syria. "The officials said Syrian border guards have been bribed to ignore the infiltration of insurgents into Iraq. So far, they said, the Syrian military has not engaged the U.S. Marines along the Iraqi-Syrian border. But they said in some cases Syrian border guards were involved in clashes between insurgents and U.S. troops."

Democrats, Republicans close ranks

In an Op-Ed in the April 13 *Washington Post* Democratic Party presidential candidate John Kerry said, "While we may have differed on how we went to war, Americans of all political persuasions are united in our determination to succeed. The extremists attacking our forces should know they will not succeed in dividing America."

Kerry reiterated his opposition to a "premature withdrawal" of troops and support for sending more if U.S. commanders requested them. He called for making the United Nations a "full partner" in the occupation and transition to an interim Iraqi government, and for the involvement of NATO troops.

"It was striking how little the two men differ on the steps they say should be taken to secure the peace in Iraq," wrote Terence Neal in the *Washington Post*.

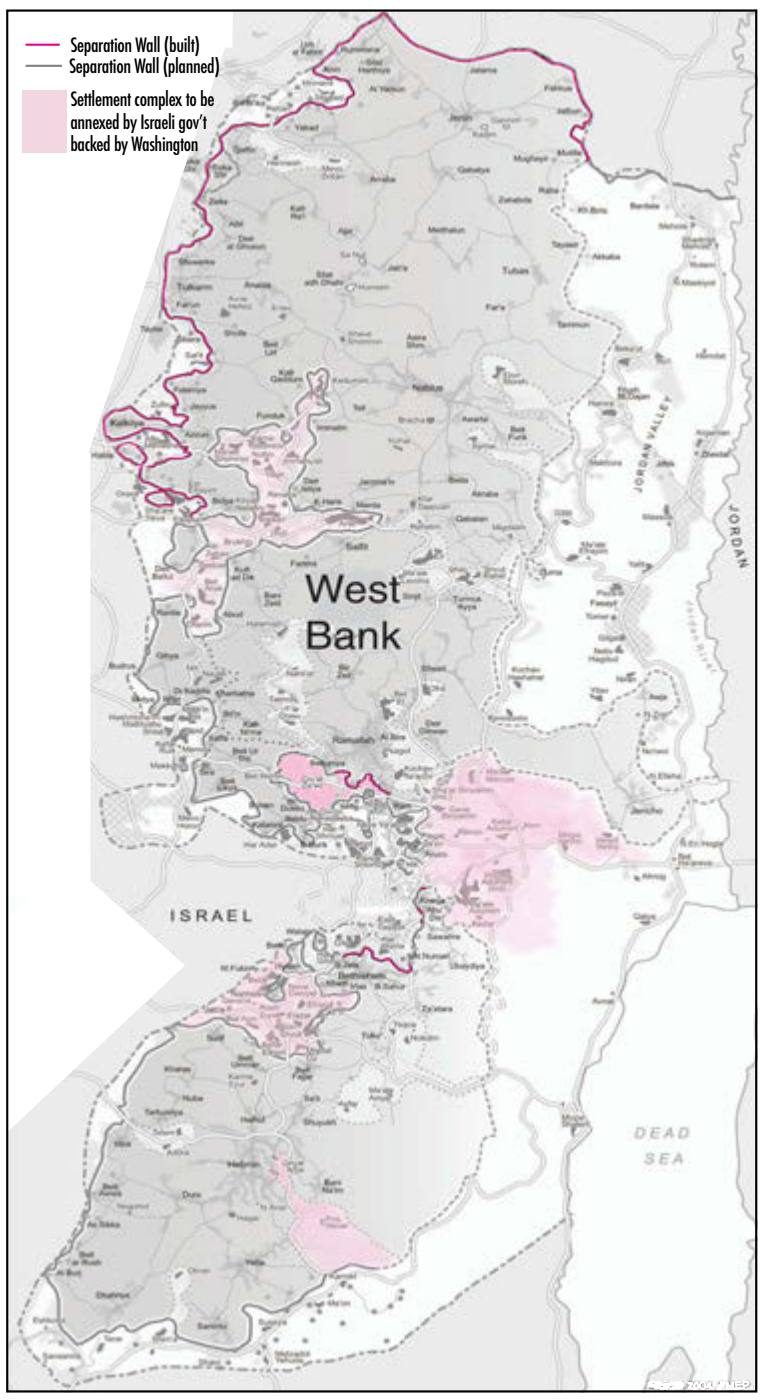
William Kristol, editor of the conservative *Weekly Standard*, praised Kerry, saying, "He is not willing to cut and run from Iraq… He wants the UN to be more involved, but he doesn't say if we can't get the UN more involved, we should get out. President Bush is trying to get the UN involved too."

At the April 16 press conference with Blair, Bush said he welcomed "the proposals presented by the UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi who has come up with a plan for a caretaker government to assume sovereignty from the U.S. occupation authority." He said the UN diplomat had "identified a way forward to establishing an interim government that is broadly acceptable to the Iraqi people."

Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister, has proposed an interim government with leading officials selected by the UN in consultation with the U.S.-led occupation authority.

Meanwhile, Spain's newly elected prime minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, said April 18 that he would rapidly withdraw the 1,300 Spanish troops from Iraq, without specifying a date.

Zapatero had said his government would leave the troops there if the UN takes over responsibility for Iraq after the June 30 deadline set by Washington for recasting its occupation under the cover of "Iraqi sovereignty." The Agence France-Presse news service reported that hours before he was sworn in as the official government leader, Zapatero said that "Madrid's conditions for maintaining the contingent in the US-led occupation force appeared unlikely to be fulfilled."



Settlements

Continued from Page 6

Israeli helicopters launched missile attacks in Rafah, a town in southern Gaza, wounding 20 Palestinians, reported the UK *Guardian*. Israeli military officials said they were looking for tunnels used to transport weapons across the Egyptian border to Palestinian fighters. Israeli troops have demolished scores of homes in Rafah over the past three years, the newspaper said.

‘Revolution unleashes artistic freedom’

Below is an excerpt from *Manifesto for an independent revolutionary art*. The manifesto was drafted by André Breton in collaboration with Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky and also signed by Mexican muralist Diego Rivera. The full document appears in *What Is Surrealism? Selected Writings* by Breton, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for April.

Breton was a founder and leader of the surrealist movement, one of the most influential currents of twentieth-century art and criticism. In the manifesto he derides “socialist realism”—the “artistic” template enforced by the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union—as the negation of intellectual and artistic freedom, and contrary to the interests of working people. Copyright © 1978 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

Left to right, André Breton, Diego Rivera, and Leon Trotsky in Mexico, 1938.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

❖

BY ANDRÉ BRETON

In the contemporary world we must recognize the ever more widespread destruction of those conditions under which intellectual creation is possible. From this follows of necessity an increasingly manifest degradation not only of the work of art but also of the specifically ‘artistic’ personality. The regime of Hitler, now that it has rid Germany of all those artists whose work expressed the slightest sympathy for liberty, however superficial, has reduced those who still consent to take up pen or brush to the status of domestic servants of the regime, whose task it is to glorify it on order, according to the worst possible aesthetic conventions. If reports may be believed, it is the same in the Soviet Union, where Thermidorian reaction is now reaching its climax.

It goes without saying that we do not identify ourselves with the currently fashionable catchword, ‘Neither fascism nor communism!’—a shibboleth which suits the temperament of the philistine, conservative and frightened, clinging to the tattered remnants of the ‘democratic’ past. True art, which is not content to play variations on ready-made models but rather insists on expressing the inner needs of man and of mankind in its time—true art is unable not to be revolutionary, not to aspire to a complete and radical reconstruction of society. This it must do, were it only to deliver intellectual creation from the chains which bind it, and to allow all mankind to raise itself to those heights which only isolated geniuses have achieved in the past. We recognize that only the social revolution can sweep clean the path for a new culture. If, however, we reject all solidarity with the bureaucracy now in control of the Soviet Union, it is precisely because, in our eyes, it represents not communism but its most treacherous and dangerous enemy.

The totalitarian regime of the USSR, working through the so-called cultural organizations it controls in other countries, has spread over the entire world a deep twilight hostile to every sort of spiritual value; a twilight of filth and blood in which, disguised as intellectuals and artists, those men steep themselves who have made of servility a career, of lying-for-pay a custom, and of the palliation of crime a source of pleasure. The official art of Stalinism, with a blatancy unexampled in history, mirrors their efforts to put a good face on their mercenary profession.

The repugnance which this shameful negation of principles of art inspires in the artistic world—a negation which even slave states have never dared to carry so far—should give rise to an active, uncompromising condemnation. The opposition of writers and artists is one of the forces which can usefully contribute to the discrediting and overthrow of regimes that are destroying, along with the right of the proletariat to aspire to a better world, every sentiment of nobility and even of human dignity.

The communist revolution is not afraid of art. It realizes that the role of the artist in a decadent capitalist society is determined by the conflict between the individual and various social forms which are hostile to him. This fact alone, in so far as he is conscious of it, makes the artist the natural ally of revolution. The process of sublimation, which here comes into play and which psychoanalysis has analysed, tries to restore the broken equilibrium between the integral ‘ego’ and the outside elements it rejects. This restoration works to the advantage of the ‘ideal of self’, which marshals against the unbearable present reality all those powers of the interior world, of the ‘id’, which are common to all men and which are constantly flowering and developing. The need for emancipation felt by the individual spirit has only to follow its natural course to be led to mingle its stream with this primeval necessity—the need for the emancipation of man.

The conception of the writer’s function which the young Marx worked out is worth recalling. ‘The writer’, he said, ‘naturally must make money in order to live and write, but he should not under any circumstances live and write in order to make money . . . The writer by no means looks on his work as a means. It is an end in itself and so little a means in the eyes of himself and of others that if necessary he sacrifices his existence to the existence of his work . . . The first condition of freedom of the press is that it is not a business activity.’

It is more than ever fitting to use this statement against those who would regiment intellectual activity in the direction of ends foreign to itself and prescribe, in the guise of so-called reasons of state, the themes of art. The free choice of these themes and the absence of all restrictions on the range of his exploitations—these are possessions which the artist has a right to claim as inalienable. In the realm of artistic creation, the imagination must escape from all constraint and must under no pretext allow itself to be placed under bonds. To those who urge us, whether for today or for tomorrow, to consent that art should submit to a discipline which we hold to be radically incompatible with its nature, we give a flat refusal and we repeat our deliberate intention of standing by the formula *complete freedom for art*.

We recognize, of course, that the revolutionary state has the right to defend itself against the counterattack of the bourgeoisie, even when this drapes itself in the flag of science or art. But there is an abyss between these enforced and temporary measures of revolutionary self-defense and the pretension to lay commands on intellectual creation.

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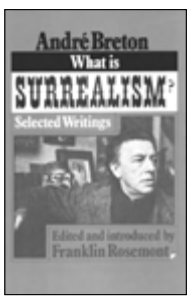

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Is biology a woman's destiny?

The following are excerpts from the pamphlet *Is Biology Women's Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed, published by Pathfinder Press. (See ad on page 3.) Reed, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party and a prominent spokesperson for the women's liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, argues that women's oppression arose late in human history as a product of the rise of class society. It is copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

Militant/Howard Petrick

Women's Strike for Equality in New York, Aug. 26, 1970. Demonstration of 40,000 marked explosion of women's liberation movement as part of broader struggles by working people.

BY EVELYN REED

Many women in the liberation movement, especially those who have studied Engels's *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, have come to understand that the roots of women's degradation and oppression are lodged in class society. Quite correctly they have coined the term "sexist" to describe the capitalist social system, the final stage of class society, which discriminates against women in every sphere of life.

What women remain unsure about, however, is whether or not their biology has played a part in making and keeping them the "second sex." Such uncertainty is quite understandable in a male-dominated society where not only is history written by those who uphold the status quo but all the sciences are likewise in their hands. Two of these sciences, biology and anthropology, are of prime importance in understanding women and their history. Both are so heavily biased in favor of the male sex that they conceal rather than reveal the true facts about women.

Perhaps the most pernicious pseudoscientific propaganda on female inferiority is that offered in the name of biology. According to the mythmakers in this field, females are biologically handicapped by the organs and functions of motherhood. This handicap is said to go all the way back to the animal world and makes females helpless and dependent upon the superior male sex to provide for them and their young. Nature is held responsible for having condemned females to everlasting inferiority.

It is obvious that females are biologically different from males in that only the female sex possesses the organs and functions of maternity. But it is not true that nature is responsible for the oppression of women; such degradation is exclusively the result of man-made institutions and laws in class-divided patriarchal society….

Have women always been oppressed?

Since the rise of the women's liberation movement some women writers and even anthropologists have become so influenced by these unscientific propositions that they have drawn a very pessimistic conclusion. Women, they say, have been the oppressed sex not simply under patriarchal society but throughout all human history. According to this view, if women were not subjugated to their husbands and fathers as they are in patriarchal nations, then they were under the thumb of their brothers or uncles in primitive communities. This can be called the "avunculate theory" of female oppression. What is the truth of the matter?

There are a number of primitive communities scattered around the world where old matriarchal practices and customs survive to a greater or lesser extent. These are usually called "matrilineal" communities because the line of kinship and descent is still traced through the mothers alone. But the matter goes deeper than this. In such regions the father-family is still poorly developed. A man may be recognized as the husband of the mother and yet not be recognized as the father of her children, or, if recognized, has only an extremely tenuous connection with them. As this is usually expressed, the children belong to the mother and her kin.

This means that the children belong not only to the mothers but also to the brothers of such a matrilineal community. In other words, the mothers' brothers, or maternal uncles, still perform the functions of fatherhood for their clan sisters' children that in patriarchal societies have been taken over by the father for his wife's children. For this reason such a community is sometimes called "the avunculate." The term "avunculate" refers to the mother's brother as the term "patriarch" refers to the father.

These matrilineal communities are survivals from the matriarchal epoch and, however much they have been altered since the patriarchal takeover, testify to the priority of the earlier social system. In fact, by the time anthropology began in the last century, most primitive clans had already become altered in their composition to a certain degree. Pairing couples, or what [Lewis] Morgan called "pairing families," had made their appearance in communities that had formerly been composed solely of clan mothers and brothers (or sisters and brothers).

But the pairing family, which was still a part of the collectivist maternal clan system, was a totally different kind of family than the patriarchal family which came in with class society. A new man from outside the clan was added to the maternal group—the husband of the woman who became his wife. However, while the husbands participated in providing for their wives and children, so long as the clan system prevailed the husbands remained subordinate and even incidental to the mothers' brothers….

[Bronislaw] Malinowski writes:

> Social position [among Trobriand Islanders] is handed on in the mother-line from a man to his sister's children, and this exclusively matrilineal conception of kinship is of paramount importance . . . people joined by the tie of maternal kinship form a closely knit group, bound by an identity of feelings, of interests, and of flesh. And from this group, even those united to it by marriage and by the father-to-child relation are sharply excluded. . . .

Matrilineal communities

The pioneer anthropologists of the last century found many examples of matrilineal communities passing over to patrilineal and patriarchal forms of social organization. As E. Sidney Hartland sums up the evidence, patriarchal rule "made perpetual inroads upon mother-right all over the world; consequently matrilineal institutions are found in almost all stages of transition."

The position of women in some of these surviving communities-in-transition remained largely unaltered, and they continued to enjoy economic independence and social esteem. In other regions, however, particularly those in which class relations, patriarchalism, and male supremacy have been superimposed upon a rude economy, women became as degraded as their sisters in class society. In such regions women can be as much oppressed by their brothers as by their husbands and fathers.

Australia is often offered as proof of the debased condition of primitive women. But, according to [Walter] Spencer and [Francis] Gillen, the highest authorities on the central tribes, there is a "great gap" between the old traditional period and the present. They conclude that the women formerly occupied a far different and higher position than in recent times.

Robert Briffault, summing up this and other reports, maintains that patriarchalism, male domination, and the debased condition of women are "features of comparatively late origin" and have supplanted a former condition of female influence and esteem. "The Australian natives are not only a primitive, they are in many respects also a degraded race," he says, and that is why male domination, once instituted, proceeded to "its extreme consequences." This should not be surprising in a continent where, through disease and other causes, the aboriginal population of 500,000 was reduced to 50,000 within a century after the coming of the white man.

In sharp contrast, there are many regions in which matriarchal customs have been preserved and there is no such debasement either of the women or of the men. Such examples can be found among the North American Indians, where male supremacy and oppression of women were nonexistent until they were brought over, along with whiskey and guns, by the civilized settlers from Europe. Briffault cites the following from the missionary J.F. Lafitau:

> Nothing is more real than this superiority of the women. It is in the women that properly consists the nation, the nobility of blood, the genealogical tree, the order of generations, the preservation of families. It is in them that all real authority resides; the country, the fields, and all the crops belong to them. They are the soul of the councils, the arbiters of war and peace….

One of the most interesting confrontations between the Iroquois men and the white men who looked down upon women as the inferior sex is cited by Briffault. The chosen orator of the Iroquois, "Good Peter," addressed Governor Clinton in this manner to explain the high esteem of the Native Americans for women:

> Brothers! Our ancestors considered it a great offence to reject the counsels of their women, particularly of the Female Governesses. They were esteemed the mistresses of the soil. Who, said our forefathers, brings us into being? Who cultivates our land, kindles our fires, and boils our pots, but the women? Our women...are the life of the nation….

Socialist Educational Weekend
New York ≈ April 30-May2

Forum:
Friday, April 30, 7:30 p.m.
(preceded by dinner, 6:30 p.m.)
"Iraq and Imperialism's Worldwide Offensive"
Speaker: Martín Koppel
editor, 'Perspectiva Mundial'

Classes:
Saturday, May 1, 6 p.m.
"Is Biology Women's Destiny?"
(followed by dinner and dance)

Sunday, May 2, 11 a.m.
"The Long View of History"

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—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 4, 1979

In the early morning hours of April 18 Nazi thugs fired three gunshots into the offices of the Indianapolis Socialist Workers Campaign Committee. The committee had announced its candidate for mayor, David Ellis, at a March 28 news conference.

Since the news conference, Ellis's campaign had attracted much attention, both from the local press and from working people in this city. He had marched at a picket line protesting sales of the Krugerrand, the gold South African coin. And he had issued a statement to the press on the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, which was distributed at an April 7 antinuclear march in Bloomington.

The bullet holes in the front windows of the offices were found Wednesday morning by campaign workers, along with a sticker bearing a swastika from an American Nazi Party splitoff, the National Socialist White Peoples Party.

Ellis immediately called the police, who upon arriving at the campaign office said that the shots were probably fired from a pellet gun. But broken glass was found scattered thirty feet from the window. The cops took no action, saying that if campaign workers found the bullets or other evidence they should contact police detectives.

Confronting Indianapolis Mayor William Hudnut at an appearance the next night, Ellis demanded that Hudnut condemn this violent attack on his rights as a candidate and order the police department to investigate the incident.

An appeal has been drafted protesting right-wing attacks and is being circulated for the signatures of prominent individuals and organizations. A public speak-out is being held at the Militant Bookstore, 4163 North College.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

May 3, 1954

The current right swing in the policy of the American Communist Party constitutes a mortal danger to the American working class. The danger is this: the Stalinist policy of support to the Democratic Party and the labor bureaucracy can spell the defeat of the American working class in the struggle with fascist McCarthyism.

Here is the proclaimed policy of the party that dares to call itself "Communist":

(1) The menace of fascism can be defeated by "a popular coalition movement which unites labor, the working farmers, the Negro people, small and middle-size business and those groups of capital opposed to the McCarthy program of fascism and war."

(2) This coalition must take place within the framework of the capitalist party system because "the two-party system remains the form through which the overwhelming majority of the American people now express themselves in politics."

(3) The organization of an independent Labor Party must be shelved for the next two national elections: "Its (labor's) objective must be to bring about a regroupment and realignment within the Democratic Party nationally and within the Republican Party in local areas."

(4) The issue is not socialism or fascism but capitalist democracy or fascism: "The Communist Party emphasizes that the issue at the present time is not Communism. The choice before our people today is peace, security, democracy versus the grip which the monopolists have on the country and their plans for fascism and war."

The Socialist Workers Party declares that this program of the American Stalinists is a program of betrayal of the American working class to the fascist hangmen.

EDITORIAL

No to U.S. threats against Korea!

We devote the editorial space this week to a message that Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes and Olivia Nelson of the Young Socialists sent April 15 to the Workers Party of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK).

On the occasion of the April 15 national holiday of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists reaffirm our solidarity with the people and government of the DPRK in the face of threats to your national sovereignty by Washington, Tokyo, and other imperialist powers. We stand shoulder to shoulder with Koreans everywhere in the struggle to make a reality of the slogan, "Korea is one!"

In the latest acceleration of imperialist threats against the DPRK, the U.S. and Japanese governments have stepped up efforts to bolster their military offensive in the region by constructing a provocatively misnamed "missile defense shield" in Asian seas. Washington's talk of "defending Japan" is camouflage for the U.S. rulers' drive to achieve the ability to fire offensive missiles with impunity, protected by their "shield" from incoming missiles launched in self-defense. The DPRK is a primary target of the Aegis and Patriot ballistic missile systems the U.S. and Japanese armed forces are deploying this year. Washington has directly enlisted Australia in this deadly arms buildup in the Pacific and is providing advanced radar technology to the government of Taiwan, as well.

Meanwhile, U.S. troops last month carried out their annual joint military maneuvers with south Korean forces. This rehearsal of aggression against the DPRK involved not only the 37,000-plus U.S. forces trampling Korean sovereignty in the southern half of the peninsula but thousands of others as well.

The war moves of Washington, London, Paris, Ottawa, Canberra and other imperialist powers, carried out on the pretext of the "global war on terrorism," are aimed not just at the DPRK and Iran, the remaining points of Bush's infamous "axis of evil." The superrich families of finance capital in North America, Europe, and the Pacific are also aiming to carry out widening dragnets, intensify domestic spying, impose compulsory fingerprinting, and roll back the rights of the accused and convicted. While the rulers' initial moves often target the foreign-born and oppressed national minorities, these repressive measures endanger the rights of working people and the labor movement as a whole.

From the stepped-up U.S. military operations against residents of Baghdad, Fallujah, and other Iraqi cities; to Washington's backing of capitalist forces in Venezuela organizing to oust the elected government; to the shanghaiing of Haiti's elected president and dispatch of U.S. troops there, the imperialist predators are sending a message to all who resist their domination. But working people worldwide, including in the United States and Europe, continue to struggle for livable wages and job conditions, the right to till the soil, and the liberties needed to organize to fight for these goals and win.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists pledge to continue our efforts to arm such working-class fighters, their toiling allies on the land, and young people inspired by their resistance with the facts about the struggles of the Korean people against imperialist aggression. We demand: No to all military threats and provocations! End the economic embargo! Normalize diplomatic relations with the DPRK! All U.S. troops out of Korea!

9-11 hearings boost spying

Continued from front page

infrastructure, including airports, trains, and chemical plants," according to the Associated Press.

"Now may be a time to revamp and reform our intelligence services," said U.S. president George Bush April 12, the day before the 9-11 commission entered its latest two-day session. Following the hearings, Bush said in his weekly radio broadcast that "law enforcement and intelligence personnel must be allowed to share more information, so that we can better pursue terrorists inside the United States." He urged Congress to reaffirm the USA Patriot Act, which increased police surveillance powers and gave the cops the green light to jail immigrants without charges if they are deemed "terrorism suspects."

On his campaign web site, Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry advocates "reforming domestic intelligence capabilities by immediately making the director of the CIA the Director of National Intelligence, with real control of national intelligence personnel and budgets."

During an April 18 appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press," Kerry said, "I think that I can fight a far more effective war on terror. I can build alliances and cooperation. I will make America safer."

The day after the latest hearings, the *New York Times* reported that White House officials are discussing the creation of "a powerful new post of director of national intelligence," which would be given the "management of the government's 15 intelligence agencies, and control of their budgets." These powers would be vested in a new official or in the CIA boss, who is already assigned to keep an eye on the activities of the different spy agencies.

Earlier the *Times* had said that the establishment of a "domestic intelligence agency like the MI5 in Britain" was also under consideration."

The proposal for a director of spy agencies goes back to the administration of William Clinton, who signed a bill creating an "intelligence czar" in his last days in office. The spy chief was supposed to draw together all intelligence agencies and work with private business.

The most recent hearings of the September 11 commission involved officials from the current and previous administrations. These included Attorney General John Ashcroft, CIA director George Tenet, and FBI director Robert Mueller, as well as Janet Reno, attorney general under Clinton, and former FBI director Louis Freeh.

Commissioners criticized the spy agencies for being unable to patch together existing evidence to predict and foil the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Such criticism has been the framework for the body's push for reinforcement of Washington's spy networks at home and abroad.

Among the lesser-known figures testifying was Cofer Black, a former CIA "counterterrorism chief." Black told the commission that the spies "knew what we were up against" in their pursuit of the al Qaeda organization. "We didn't have enough money—by magnitudes," he said. The spy operations presently soak up $40 billion a year.

Columnists and editors of big-business dailies, especially liberals, have been pounding away at similar themes.

"We need to restructure the intelligence community so one person really is in charge of all the pieces and budgets," *Times* columnist Nicholas Kristoff wrote April 17.

Disputing Bush's statements that it was impossible to predict and counter the September 11 attacks, Kristoff pointed to what he said was the uncovering of Project Bojinka, an alleged "terror plot in 1995 to blow up" a dozen U.S. jumbo jets over the Pacific.

With Washington's go-ahead, he said, Filipino police seized a "key figure" in the alleged plot, Abdul Hakim Murad. "We let the Filipinos 'interrogate' Murad," said Kristoff. "After he'd been beaten with a chair, burned with cigarettes and half-drowned, he disclosed a plan for a suicide airplane attack on the CIA's headquarters."

'Militant' welcomes new staff member

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

With this issue, the *Militant* welcomes Doug Nelson onto the writing staff. Nelson, 28, lived in Cleveland until recently, where he worked in a pork slaughterhouse and was a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Nelson joined the Young Socialists in 1996, while he was a student at the Minneapolis Community College in Minneapolis, and the Socialist Workers Party shortly thereafter. He had been active on campus in a struggle to defend affirmative action in face of an effort by the administration to cut scholarships. In 1996, he was part of the SWP slate in the state elections, running as the party's candidate for Minnesota assembly in District 63-A. The magazine of the American Association of Retired Persons covered his campaign.

The next year, Nelson moved to Atlanta to help build the communist movement there. He was the SWP candidate for Atlanta mayor in the 1997 elections and beat back an attempt by city authorities to disqualify him from the ballot. While in Georgia, Nelson worked in plants organized by UNITE union and the United Steel Workers of America. In 1998, Nelson moved to New York, where he worked for five years in the print shop producing Pathfinder books and the *Militant*.

Over the last eight years, Nelson has also written articles for the *Militant* as a worker-correspondent. These include reporting on protests against the U.S.-NATO assaults on Yugoslavia in the 1990s, an FBI raid targeting Algerian immigrants in Brooklyn in 2000, and actions by the Cleveland city government to slash jobs and services last year.

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Doug Nelson

Social Security as a political, moral question

BY JAMES HARRIS

In his letter to the editor [see facing page] Maceo Dixon raises an important question about social security. He refers to a sentence in the March 15 *Militant* editorial headlined "Defend Social Security," that reads, "This is not primarily an economic crisis, but the great political and moral crisis of our time."

Dixon asks, "I thought the drive to stem the declining profit rate of the capitalist system was behind the political and moral crisis of our time. Is this not true or am I missing something?"

The editorial takes up the recent call by U.S. Federal Reserve chief Alan Greenspan to cut Social Security benefits and the favorable response it has received in big-business circles. Repeating a common argument peddled by the employer class, Greenspan claimed this entitlement is on the verge of "bankruptcy" because of the large numbers of so-called baby boomers approaching retirement. The *Militant* makes the point that Greenspan's remarks were carefully calculated to "soften the beaches for a government assault on Social Security."

REPLY TO A READER

The editorial states, "The tiny handful of billionaire families who rule the United States, however, face an increasingly acute crisis. Since the mid-1970s their profit rates have continued to decline. To turn this around they are driven by the inexorable workings of capitalism to wage a double offensive—a military offensive abroad under the banner of the 'war on terrorism' and an offensive at home to roll back the social gains of workers and farmers and intensify class exploitation. That means ultimately dismantling the social security system and forcing workers to fend for themselves."

Different social classes have different approaches to this question—the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and landowners on the one hand, and workers and farmers on the other. From the point of view of the ruling class and their spokespeople, it's a "problem" that our class lives longer—often a decade past the retirement age—than we did when Social Security was instituted in the 1930s. In their warped mind, our longevity is cutting into their profits. But since that argument is a little too crude, they try to rope working people into accepting their framework by posing it as a budgetary question that "we" must be concerned about, and that the solution is to find some way to "balance the budget."

From the point of view of working people, on the other hand, social security is a *necessity*, a social right. And the limited benefits we earn today are a by-product of the massive labor struggles of the 1930s and the Black rights battles of the 1950s and '60s.

Above all, the fight to defend and extend social security is not fundamentally an economic but a political question. It's about preventing the ruling class and the brutal consequences of their economic system from tearing up the solidarity and integrity of our class. The bosses constantly foster the rat-race mentality of looking out for "me and mine" and to hell with everyone else. Working people can solve the common problems we face, which are caused by capitalism, only by fighting as a *class* and championing the interests of all the oppressed, beginning with those most vulnerable to attack. That's the political and moral starting point for our class.

I think this is stated best in Pathfinder Press's *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes. He states that for working people, "Social Security was the beginning of the attempt to moderate the dog-eat-dog competition imposed on the working class under capitalism. Social Security was an initial step by our class—by those who produce wealth—toward conquering the social organization of conditions necessary for life, such as education and health care *for a lifetime*. Workers think of each other in terms of a lifetime. We cannot think of each other the way capitalists think of us. We cannot make ourselves think of other human beings as though they do not exist up to the age of thirteen or after the age of sixty-five. That is not how workers function. We have a different class view, a different moral view of society. Elementary human solidarity is in our interests, not in conflict with them."

The working class is the only class in history that has the capacity to organize a "self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority," as Marx and Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*. To meet that political and moral challenge of our epoch, working people need to forge a revolutionary leadership that can unite workers and farmers in a struggle to wrest state power out of the hands of the exploiters, to put it in our own hands, and to build a decent world.

THE MILITANT
online
www.themilitant.com

Cubans saw solidarity to Africa as 'duty'

'Conflicting Missions' author speaks in N.Y. on Cuba's internationalism

BY PAUL PEDERSON

BRONXVILLE, New York—"The Cubans believe that they have the duty to help other people gain their freedom," said Piero Gleijeses, author of *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa 1959–1976*. "This is a duty of the revolution and this is a very strong belief."

Gleijeses was addressing a group of 40 students, professors, and others at an April 7 lecture at Sarah Lawrence College here on the theme of "Cuba and Africa." His book traces the history of Cuba's internationalist aid in Africa beginning in Algeria in 1961 to the Congo and Guinea Bissau. It ends with the first two years of Cuba's mission to help defend newly independent Angola in 1975. The book also documents Washington's foreign policy in Africa during the same period, contrasting it to that of Havana.

Professor Piero Gleijeses

Gleijeses—a professor of American Foreign Policy at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C.—said that he is currently writing a second volume on the subject, which will focus on the Cuban mission to Angola from 1975 to 1988. This was the high point of Cuba's aid to African liberation struggles, involving some 300,000 Cuban volunteers who helped defend the independence of the former Portuguese colony from a U.S.-backed South African invasion aimed at strengthening the white-minority regime's grip in southern Africa.

Gleijeses drew on a treasure trove of original documents and interviews to back up his account. These documents—both from U.S. intelligence agencies and the Cuban archives—consistently confirm the fact that the policies the Cuban leadership pursues around the world flow from the proletarian internationalism of the leadership of Cuba's socialist revolution. They refute Washington's official propaganda argument that Cuba acted as a "Soviet satellite" or out of narrow self-interest.

Henry Kissinger, the U.S. secretary of state who helped lead the joint U.S.-South African operation in Angola, confirmed this fact, Gleijeses said. He quoted Kissinger's 1999 memoirs where he admits that he erred in assuming that the Cuban government was acting as "a Soviet surrogate" there. "We could not imagine that he [Castro] would act in such a provocative manner so far from his country unless Moscow pressured him…. Evidence now available suggests the opposite was the case…. Castro," Kissinger concluded, "was probably the most genuine revolutionary in power in those moments."

In 1975, the Cuban leadership acted contrary to the course of the Stalinist Soviet leadership of seeking "peaceful co-existence" with U.S. imperialism in sending troops to defend Angola, Gleijeses said. Cuba organized—without assistance from Moscow—a massive, slow, and perilous airlift of soldiers using Cuban planes and boats to come to the assistance of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the leadership of the independence struggle there. In the weeks leading up to this Cuban operation, a powerful South African military column, acting with Washington's support, entered Angola, cut through MPLA resistance, and was penetrating deep into the country.

"In terms of *realpolitik* it was not in the interests of Cuba to send the troops," Gleijeses said. The Cuban leadership risked trade relations with European governments, he said, as well as sharpening the conflict with Washington. The biggest risk, he said, was that if the South African regime rapidly increased the invasion force the small Cuban contingent—which was only slowly increasing because Cuba did not have enough planes and boats to ship troops quickly—could face a bloody military defeat before Cuba had time to get enough of its forces on the ground.

"It wasn't just to help Angola, to help the MPLA," Gleijeses noted. "The significance of the Cuban victory went beyond Angola."

The initial defeats the apartheid army suffered were a tremendous boost to the confidence of workers and peasants fighting against colonial and white-minority rule in southern Africa. In Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Cuba's victories in Angola helped propel the collapse of the white-minority regime there in 1980.

But the biggest blow to Washington and Pretoria's plans for the region was yet to come. "In September 1987, South Africa launched a devastating incursion in southeastern Angola and they cornered the best units of the Angolan army in a small village called Cuito Cuanavale," Gleijeses explained. Their aim, he said, was to weaken the MPLA, which was providing safe haven for independence fighters from neighboring Namibia—then ruled as a colony by the white-minority government in South Africa.

Pastor Batista/Juventud Rebelde

Cuban volunteers in Angola, 1988. Cuban solidarity played key part in defeat of South African invasion. The victory's impact, said Piero Gleijeses, "went beyond Angola."

"The only government that reacts to this offensive is Cuba, which sends its best units and most sophisticated hardware," he added. "The South Africans attack, attack, attack, and their last major attack is on March 23, 1988, but they fail again and again."

A few days after the final South African assault, a force of 10,000 Cuban troops begins moving in the direction of the Namibian border.

"The Cubans moved with such dispatch and on such a scale that an immediate South African military response would have involved serious risks," Gleijeses explained. So the South Africans withdrew.

The defeat of the racist South African invaders at Cuito Cuanavale paved the way for the safeguarding of Angola's independence and winning the liberation of neighboring Namibia. It also led to the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, the release of Nelson Mandela, and eventually the victory of the ANC-led struggle to uproot apartheid.

Namibia's independence was formalized in July 1988 in a pact called the New York Agreement. Newspaper reports at the time cited Washington's negotiators as the force behind the agreement. Gleijeses, however, described a different story. As the Cuban troops were advancing toward Namibia, Ronald Reagan's deputy secretary of state for African affairs sought out Cuban representative Jorge Risquet, who at the time was leading Cuba's policy in Africa. The U.S. official asked if the Cuban troops planned to cross the border into Namibia and come to the aid of the independence movement.

"I am neither going to threaten you nor reassure you," Gleijeses quoted Risquet as saying in response. "If you want a guarantee that we will not enter Namibia, the only guarantee is the independence of the country." By the end of the year, the South African government withdrew from Namibia and recognized its independence. Within a few years, the apartheid regime itself collapsed.

This is why the Cuban Revolution remains "a bone in Washington's throat," said Gleijeses. "Cuba has achieved something that no American threats and no embargo can ever silence and this is reflected in the words of [South African leader] Nelson Mandela when he visited Havana in 1991: 'We come here with a sense of the great debt that is owed the people of Cuba. What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than what Cuba has displayed in its relations with Africa.'"

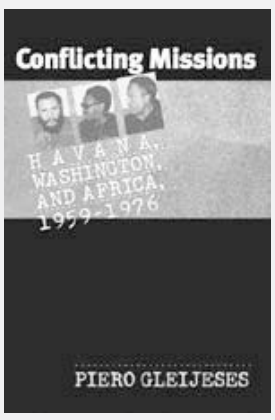
In the discussion that followed, Gleijeses was asked about Cuba's role in Ethiopia and its relationship with the Eritrean movement for independence from Ethiopia. The Cuban leadership sent soldiers to Ethiopia in 1977 to defend it from a U.S.-sponsored invasion by Somalia. At the time, the Ethiopian government, which had come to power following the popular overthrow of the feudal regime of Emperor Haile Selassie, was a particular target of the imperialist powers. Opponents of the Cuban Revolution, however, have often accused Cuba of aiding the Ethiopian regime's reactionary war against the Eritrean independence movement. Gleijeses said the facts prove otherwise.

"Somalia invaded Ethiopia in July 1977," Gleijeses said. "By November, the Cubans decide to send troops to stop the Somali invasion. The Cubans never gave the least assistance to the Ethiopians against the Eritreans. All they did was stop the Somali invasion and push them back to the Somali border…. Even U.S. intelligence reports never say that the Cubans intervened against Eritrea." Cuban leaders have repeatedly made this point and the facts back it up, Gleijeses said.

***Conflicting Missions:* Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976**

By Piero Gleijeses

Documents Cuba's role in aiding the African national liberation struggles, from Algeria to Angola. *$24.95*



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LETTERS

Social Security I

In the March 15 issue of the Militant there is an editorial titled, "Defend Social Security." In it is a sentence that reads: "This is not primarily an economic crisis, but the great political and moral crisis of our time."

I thought the drive to stem the declining profit rate of the capitalist system was behind the political and moral crisis of our time. Is this not true, or am I missing something?

Maceo Dixon
Atlanta, Georgia

Social Security II

Of the two monthly checks both received early in the month, the Social Security check brings me more money. The threat of privatization of social security is a threat to me.

The way that I understand it, whenever the stock market goes down the size of my Social Security check would also go down.

However, I have read nothing about just what is this privatization of Social Security. It would be convenient if you would write me about just what it is. Then I could explain it to my friends. Kindly write soon,

Albert B. Thurston
Yonkers, New York

Appreciates accuracy

Please find enclosed a $5 check for an introductory sub to *Perspectiva Mundial*. Also enclosed is a $100 check for the *Militant*/*PM* fund drive.

A few comments:

First, I've always appreciated the *Militant's* accuracy. So I especially appreciate it when you correct errors—Miami Pact "reformist," Haiti, women's rights. It's another sign of the *Militant's* seriousness.

Second, the "Discussion with Our Readers" column is very useful.

Third, can you put a "forward this article to a friend" button on articles on the web site? It would make it much easier to do just that—send an article to a friend.

Finally, why don't you advertise *Perspectiva Mundial* in the *Militant* and online? I had to look through four issues before I found an ad with the latest subscription price.

Phil Norrris
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Greetings from Venezuela

Warm greetings from Venezuela to the editorial staff of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. Although we don't communicate frequently, we follow your magazine closely on the Internet. The articles on Venezuela about SIDOR [the country's main steel works in Bolívar state] are very good. We continue to fight for the revolutionary process in spite of adversity and the fascist intentions of the opposition. We continue to do our small part to aid the president of the republic in his effort to help the most dispossessed of Venezuela and the world. The executive committee of SUTISS [the steelworkers union] sends greetings to the editorial staff and collaborators of the magazine.

Your friend,
Carlos Valdez
Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

THE MILITANT

UN Cyprus plan: foreign troops to stay

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN AND BOBBIS MISAILIDES

ATHENS—A UN plan that would create a nominal federal government in Cyprus, while maintaining the territorial and political division of the country's Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot populations, will be submitted to a referendum on April 24. Presented by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, the proposal must receive a majority in separate votes in the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot sections of the divided island nation if it is to be implemented.

Annan and other backers of the plan, who include government representatives in the United States and the European Union powers, promote the 9,000-page scheme as a step to "reunification." That claim helped to spark a positive response to the plan when Annan first unveiled it in 2002. Not only did working people flock to large celebrations, particularly in the Turkish-Cypriot area; tens of thousands crossed the border both ways for celebratory visits when the Turkish government opened the Turkish-Cypriot border in mid-2003.

As the details of the proposal have become better known, however, opinions among working people have become more mixed, while capitalist political figures have divided into for and against camps. Facing the real possibility of defeat, the imperialist backers of the plan have stepped up pressure for its adoption.

One island, two governments

Cyprus was carved in two in 1974 following an attempt by the then-military government of Greece to annex the island for Greek imperialism. Seizing the moment, the rulers of Turkey invaded and occupied the northern part of Cyprus, and established a separate government. Some 200,000 Greek Cypriots were forced out of their homes by the Turkish invasion, while tens of thousands of Turkish-Cypriots were compelled to move north. In spite of his promises of reunifying the country, Annan's plan allows for the continued presence of troops from Greece, Turkey, and Britain. The Turkish troops would be reduced within two years from their present level of 37,000 to 6,000—equal to the number of Greek forces. Reductions would continue at a snail's pace, down to 3,000 each in 2011 and less than 1,000 by 2018. The Turkish-Cypriot and the Greek-Cypriot states would have no armed forces of their own.

London, on the other hand, would maintain its three military bases that cover 99 square miles of the island's territory. British imperialism has retained this military foothold since ending its direct colonial rule over Cyprus in 1960. According to an April 1 Reuters article, "British bases [in Cyprus] were important staging areas in the U.S.-led war on Iraq and house listening posts serving London and Washington that monitor communications through the Middle East and beyond." British prime minister Anthony Blair said April 16 that Annan's plan offered "the best chance that we will have for a generation of progress in Cyprus."

If the plan is adopted, the new federal government—named the United Cyprus Republic—would only have responsibility for external relations and monetary policy. The Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot areas would remain under separate administrations. They would maintain control over industry and commerce, tourism, agriculture, and fishing, along with labor laws and social welfare in their respective jurisdictions.

The highest court of the federated state would include equal numbers of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot judges as well as three UN-appointed foreign judges This court, which Annan describes as "the only institution that can guarantee the harmonious functioning of the state," will have veto power over any law that the federal or constituent governments pass.

Other details of the plan cover refugees and citizenship. The Turkish-Cypriot component of the new state would cover 29 percent of the island's area, down from 39 percent today. The number of Greek-Cypriot refugees allowed to return to their home areas in the north would not exceed 18 percent of the population. Forty-five thousand out of 80,000 settlers transported from Turkey after 1974 will receive Cypriot citizenship, while 60,000 Turkish-Cypriot people would have to move from their homes in cities and towns that would be turned over to the Greek-Cypriot state

According to Annan's plan Greek-Cypriots rendered homeless would receive a third of the value of their property, with the rest to be received in the form of 25-year stocks and bonds.

Washington pushes for plan

On March 31 U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell intervened in favor of the proposal, describing it as a "historic opportunity." This was the first time that U.S. officials had commented on the plan, and reflected imperialist concerns about the lack of agreement between the two Cyprus governments. "This is the time for leaders to show flexibility, for leaders to be willing to compromise for the greater good of the Cypriot people," Powell said.

According to the *Athens News,* the British foreign secretary, Jack Straw, warned that rejection of the plan would mean "a recognized partition into two states." EU representative Gunther Verheugen said, "The alternative is this plan or nothing, no solution at all." Following these comments, Greek president Costis Stephanopoulos spoke in favor of the plan, and the foreign minister threatened, "If either the Greek or Turkish Cypriot communities reject the plan, there will be no new initiative for a solution for a long time." George Papandreou, leader of the social-democratic Panhellenic Socialist Movement in Greece, urged support for the plan in a statement on April 7. Of the main political parties in Greece, only the Communist Party of Greece rejected the proposal.

Reuters/STR

April 14 rally in Turkish-Cypriot section of Nicosia, capital of Cyprus, supports UN plan, which is presented as step to national reunification but would preserve two governments and maintain presence of Greek, Turkish, and British troops.

Ankara in favor

The Turkish government has also come out in support of the plan, hoping that getting the Cypriot question off the table will smooth Turkey's entry into the EU. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul stated, however, that "if the Greek Cypriots reject it, I will tell the whole world with great confidence to recognize the TRNC [Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus]."

Politicians in the Turkish-Cypriot section are at loggerheads on the issue. Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Talat has stated his support, while President Rauf Denktash opposes it, saying that it will "completely remove Turkey from Cyprus, bring Greeks into our community and thereby destroy bi-zonality."

Greek-Cypriot politicians are also divided. In the "no" camp are President Tassos Stefanopoulos, who said the plan gives the "Turkish side" too many concessions, and the Orthodox Church hierarchy.

AKEL, the Communist Party of Cyprus, the largest party on the island, had initially come out for a "yes" vote. However, they have since shifted their position and are now calling for a two-month postponement of the referendum. Current polls indicate that a sizeable majority in the south will vote against the proposal. Some 6,000 demonstrated against the plan in the capital of Nicosia—which is itself divided into separate Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot sections—on April 4.

Greece: workers wage one-day general strike

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS AND MARIA KIRIAKI

ATHENS—Hundreds of thousands of workers downed tools March 31 across Greece in a 24-hour general strike organized by the Greek General Confederation of Labor.

The federation, known by the initials GSEE, called the strike earlier this year after employers' representatives insisted on a series of takeback demands in nationwide contract talks for the federation's 600,000 members.

Both the bosses and the government, which was led by the social democratic Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) until the victory of the conservative New Democracy Party in elections last month, are pushing for two-tier wages and other measures under the slogans of "labor flexibility." They advocate lower wages and tax exemptions for younger workers as their "solution" to the problem of unemployment, which officially stands at more than 9 percent.

Against the offer by the bosses' association of a 3.2 percent wage raise, the unions demanded a general wage raise of 8 percent and an increase in the minimum wage from 23 to 25 euros per day (1 euro = US$1.20). Inflation is currently running at almost 3.5 percent. GSEE spokespeople said that the strike tied up large parts of transportation, along with many oil refineries, shipbuilding, steel and armament plants, and large construction projects. According to the EFE Spanish news service, 6,000 workers rallied in the center of Athens to support GSEE demands.

Workers at the city's international airport called an action of their own outside the terminal building aimed at preventing check-in at struck airlines. Many in the youthful crowd of more than 150 were participating in their first such action.

Airport workers have been taking it on the chin for some time, whether they work for an airline or one of the handling companies that perform the majority of airport jobs. In the past 10 years they have seen reductions in wages, an increase in part-time and seasonal work, cutbacks in breaks, and speedup across the board.

On top of this, the airlines have proposed a nil wage increase in this year's contract, and have demanded the introduction of split shifts and other measures. These attacks come as airport workers face the extra workload of the Athens Olympic Games this summer.

Some 80 percent of workers at companies organized by the Federation of Air Transport Employees took part in the strike at the airport, reinforcing the impact of the paralysis of public transport from the city. For the first time, workers from the newly formed union at Goldair Handling, the third-largest handling company, participated.

Aegean Airlines and Olympic Airlines, the national carrier, which has been on the auction block for some time, were not affected by the action. While Aegean is a nonunion carrier, workers at Olympic have long led the way in defending wages and working conditions. During the winter, flight attendants waged a 75-day strike that was able to lessen the impact of the bosses' attacks on wages and working conditions, imposed as part of preparing the airline for sale to capitalist investors. From the Fyrogenis metal working plant, Alekos, a press operator, reported that 90 percent of production workers stayed away from work. Some 15 workers at the plant, which makes air conditioners, formed the delegation to the strike rally in the city's center. "One month ago we held a work stoppage for two hours, because the company was a week behind in paying us," he told *Militant* reporters, adding that office workers are owed one month's pay.

Crying poverty, the company still refuses to fork out the back pay. "This is after so many hours of overtime we put in producing for the Olympic installations" for the 2004 Athens games, said Alekos. He said that union membership has more than doubled over the past 10 months and both nonmembers and members alike struck on March 31.

Natasha Terlexis and Maria Kiriaki are members of the Air Transport Employees Federation and work at Athens International Airport.

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